A detailed map of a portion of Austin, Texas, serves as the background. The map shows a grid of streets including E 1st St through E 26th St, and various north-south streets like Congress Ave, Guadalupe St, and US-290. Key landmarks such as Lady Bird Lake, Kealing Park and Pool, and the Rosewood Golf Course are visible. The map is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue layer.

# City of Austin Historic Resources Survey

Contract No. MA 6800 NA160000013

## Final Report Volume II

October 24, 2016

Prepared for the City of Austin  
Prepared by Hardy·Heck·Moore, Inc.  
Austin, Texas



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## Volume III

Appendix A – Survey Area Map KMZ Files *(provided separately as electronic files)*

Appendix B – Inventory of All Surveyed Resources

## Volume IV

Appendix C – Recommended Eligible Local Landmarks and Recommended NRHP Eligible Resources

## Volume V

Appendix D – Recommended Eligible Historic Districts and Recommended NRHP Historic District Forms

Appendix E – Photo Contact Sheets *(not provided in this draft)*

Appendix F – Future Austin Survey Area Maps

Appendix G – Future Survey Prioritization Tables

Appendix H – Preservation Resources



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# VOLUME II

## 1. CITYWIDE HISTORIC CONTEXT

### 1.1. The Founding and Early Settlement of Austin, 1839–1870

#### 1.1.1. AUSTIN AS THE NEW CAPITAL OF TEXAS

The City of Austin traces its establishment to the early years of the Texas Republic, although human activity reached the area thousands of years before. Soon after Texas gained its independence from Mexico, the provisional government met in Columbia (now West Columbia) in Brazoria County. Poor accommodations led to the capital's relocation to Houston on a temporary, four-year basis.<sup>1</sup> The selection of Houston was not widely embraced, and many officials sought to establish a permanent capital elsewhere. Sam Houston, for whom the city was named, became the first elected president of the Republic of Texas in 1836 and blocked any such moves, arguing that the issue was settled until at least 1840. Mirabeau B. Lamar, who succeeded Houston as President, proposed that the capital be moved to a new site on the edge of the frontier beyond most of Texas's existing settlements. His reasoning stemmed in part from his grand vision of a vast Texas empire that extended to Santa Fe and beyond, with a capital in the Texas heartland.<sup>2</sup>

Soon after taking office in December 1838, Lamar approved the establishment of a joint congressional commission to select a capital site between the Trinity and Colorado rivers, above the Old San Antonio Road (*El Camino Real*). The new capital was to be named Austin to honor the father of Texas, Stephen F. Austin.<sup>3</sup> Although the commission considered sites across a broad geographic area, Lamar advocated a specific location about 40 miles upstream from the existing settlement of Bastrop on the Colorado River, near the small settlement of Waterloo. He had reportedly first visited the site on a buffalo hunt a few months earlier and felt the location to be ideal for the capital.

On April 13, 1839, the site-selection commission selected the Colorado River site that Lamar had suggested. The commission stipulated that the Republic acquire 7,735 acres of land along the Colorado River for the new capital. The site included land within the southern end of unclaimed Thomas J. Chambers' 8-League Grant that been partitioned into smaller units as First Class Headright surveys. For the new capital, the Republic acquired land from the George Neil, Logan Vandever, Aaron Burleson, George D. Hancock, Samuel Goocher, J. M. Harrell, J. G. Dunn, and James Rogers surveys, all of which had once been part of the Thomas J. Chambers Grant (*figure II-1*, to follow). These owners received compensation in the amount of \$3.00 or \$3.50 per acre and excluded any improvements that had already been made to the tracts of land.<sup>4</sup>

Figure 11-1. Detail of a General Land Office map. This map shows original land surveys that the Republic of Texas acquired for its new capital. In all, the Republic acquired 7,735 acres on the east (north) bank of the Colorado River. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph89016/m1/1/> crediting Texas General Land Office.

The Republic's decision to create an entirely new capital city followed a trend exemplified by Washington, D.C. Other examples included Columbia, South Carolina; Jefferson City, Missouri; Raleigh, North Carolina; Jackson, Mississippi; Columbus, Ohio; Tallahassee, Florida; and Indianapolis, Indiana. According to cultural geographer John W. Reps, the jurisdictional government that created these capitals (including Austin) either purchased, acquired through eminent domain, or used already public-owned land to establish new communities as seats of government.<sup>5</sup>

While the joint commission deliberated and considered various locations, President Lamar had taken unilateral action and engaged Edwin Waller to lay out the new town before any public announcements had been made. In a letter dated March 2, 1839, Lamar's secretary wrote to Edwin Waller (of present-day Brazoria County) that "the President...will confer on you the appointment of government Agent for the new City of Austin, the future Capital of the Republic...."<sup>6</sup> Waller, who had no formal training or expertise in such matters, subsequently hired surveyors L. J. Pilie and Charles Schoolfield to lay out the city. Out of the 7,735-acre government-owned tract, Waller chose a one-square-mile tract for the town site (*figure II-2*, to follow). This location was between two creeks (soon renamed Shoal and Waller creeks) that drained into the Colorado River.

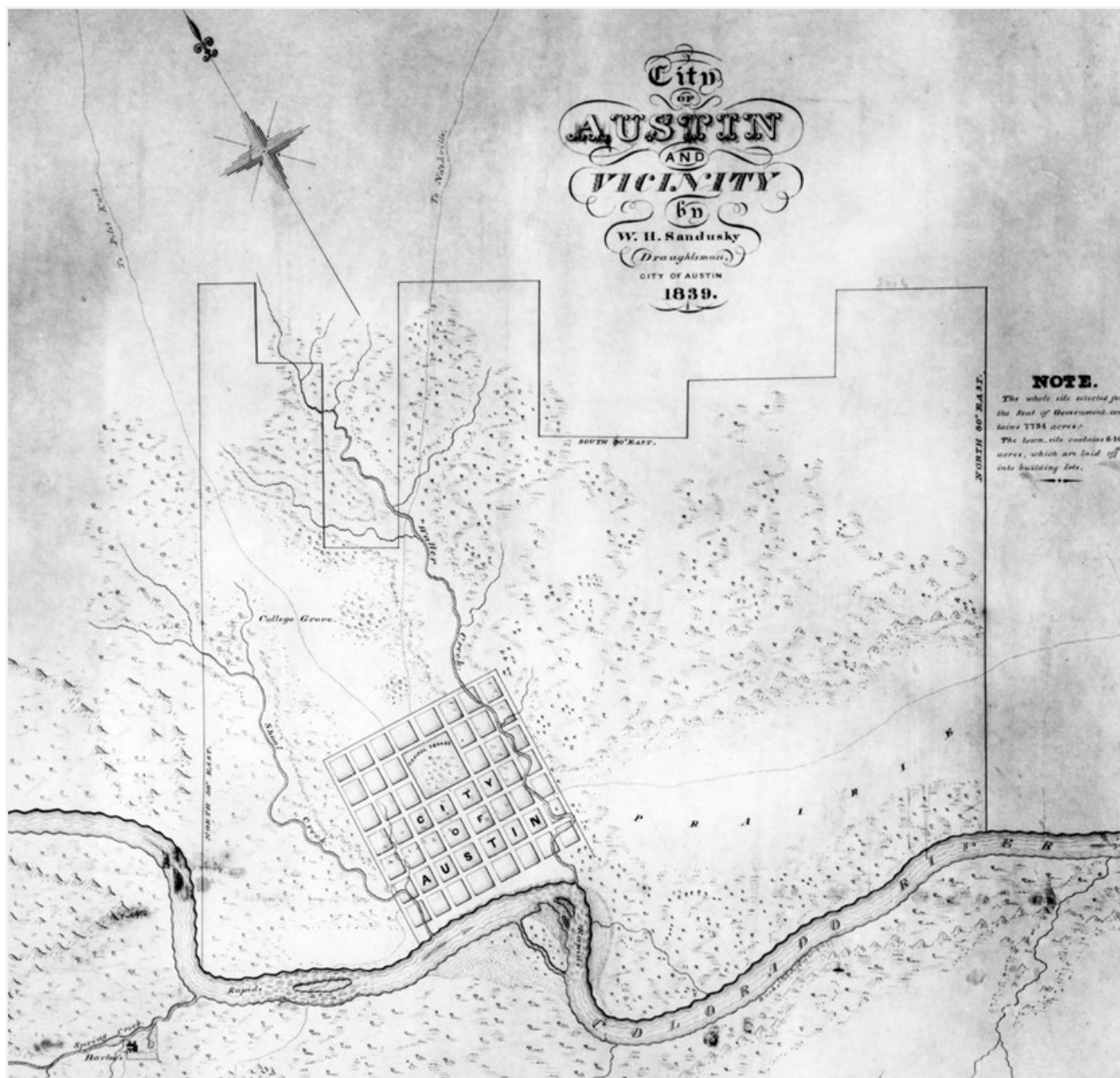


Figure II-2. William Sandusky, *City of Austin*, 1839. Sandusky, a draftsman with the General Land Office, prepared this map in 1839 showing the original city of Austin within the Republic of Texas-owned reservation set aside for the new capital. The expansive area set aside for the capital indicates the grand vision Lamar and other planned for the seat of government for Texas's vast empire. Source: General Land Office.

### 1.1.2. EDWIN WALLER'S ORIGINAL TOWN PLAN

In May 1839, Waller set about the task of creating the city and he supervised a workforce of 200 laborers. An article entitled “Reminiscences of Judge Edwin Waller,” prepared by P. E. Peareson and originally published in the *Galveston News* in 1874 (later reprinted in the *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*), provides an early description of Waller’s efforts and the kinds of buildings he constructed. Peareson writes that “[t]he public buildings erected at this time were all of plank and logs and made of native timber, and in consequence presented no very classically artistic appearance but were serviceable and comfortable.”<sup>7</sup> The work continued at a harried pace to satisfy a provision for the Texas Congress to convene in Austin by that November. Throughout this effort, the crew overcame a number of adversities including periodic Comanche raids, poor rations, and limited supplies.

While Waller and his crew continued their work, the government held an auction on August 1, 1840. Newspaper reports and advertisements promoted the sale, as illustrated by an account in the *Matagorda Bulletin* on July 18, 1838:

The time is fast approaching when public sale of Lots at the City of Austin ... is to take place ... We understand that already numbers of persons are flocking to that point, most of them with the intention of purchasing property on which to establish themselves as permanent settlers, others for the purpose of investing capital in the enterprise.

Many private individuals have their buildings already finished with the purpose of immediately erecting them on their making a purchase, and we can scarcely imagine a more heart-stirring and cheering sight than will be presented at Austin during the time of the sale and after.<sup>8</sup>

On October 17, 1840, Lamar led a contingency of government officials that completed the journey from Houston to Austin. A dinner held at the Bullock Hotel at Pecan (6th) Street and Congress celebrated the event, which was described in detail in the inaugural edition of the *Austin City Gazette* later that month.<sup>9</sup>

The capital’s relocation to Austin was only possible through Waller’s extensive and successful work to clear the land and construct buildings for government functions and public officials. A letter that acting Treasury Secretary William Sevey wrote on November 28, 1840 to David S. Kaufman, Speaker of the House Representatives, documents Waller’s monumental achievements. Sevey lists the completed public buildings and their respective lot and block locations. The letter also shows the importance of Congress Avenue since the greatest concentration of improvements fronted onto this thoroughfare.<sup>10</sup> A graphic interpretation of these building shows these buildings’ approximate location as well as other improvements in *figure II-3*, to follow.

The original town plat, as drawn by surveyor L. J. Pilie, depicts Waller’s vision for the new capital and established the framework for subsequent development. Set at a skewed angle along a slight northwest/southeast axis, this layout directly affected how the fledging city would grow and evolve over



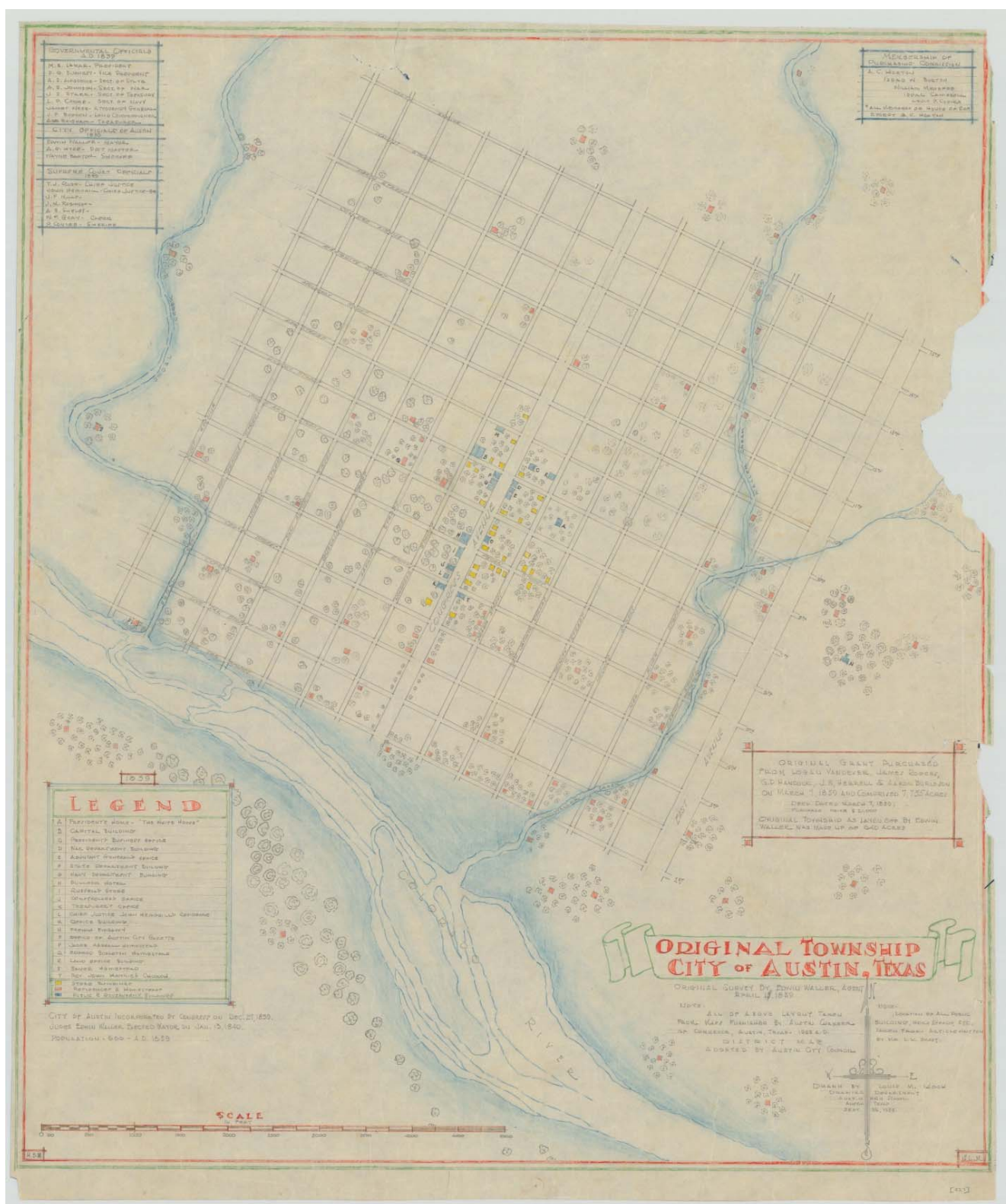


Figure II-3. This map, prepared in 1933, identifies public buildings constructed during the initial settlement of Austin. It also shows other improvements in the new city. The map depicts concentrations along Congress Avenue and demonstrates that many early citizens established their residences along Waller Creek, which provided a reliable water source. Source: Texas State Archives and Library Commission.

time. The influence of this plan cannot be overstated, and its presence continues to be felt in modern-day Austin. The plan also reveals Waller's and Lamar's grandiose plans for the new capital of Texas.

Waller adopted the grid as the underlying organizational principle for the city's layout (*figure II-4* on the following page). The grid enjoyed widespread popularity in town planning during the 1800s because it presented a consistent scheme with uniformly-sized lots and blocks that facilitated orderly growth and development.<sup>11</sup> Waller's town plan was symmetrically arranged and featured a broad central thoroughfare (Congress Avenue) that extended northward from the Colorado River and terminated at "Capitol Square." Set aside for the capitol building, this public space encompassed a rectangular-shaped area roughly the equivalent of four city blocks. The President's House and key governmental departments/agencies (Treasury, State, Post Office, War, Navy, Attorney General, General Land Office) faced onto Capitol Square. This arrangement brought all essential governmental offices and activities to a small, well-defined area. This inward-facing arrangement reflected longstanding planning traditions in both America and in Europe ranging from the New England village green to the Parisian square.<sup>12</sup>

Based on the size and orientation of city lots, the Waller Plan, as this layout will be referred to in this document, greatly influenced where commercial, residential, public, and institutional activities ultimately took place and how they affected the built environment's physical characteristics. For example, property extending three blocks on either side of the entire length of Congress Avenue contained 12 narrow elongated lots per block. This layout was ideal for dense commercial development. This arrangement maximized street exposure onto this important thoroughfare. In contrast, commercial blocks off Congress Avenue presented a north-south orientation consistent with the rest of the city's blocks. Alleys extended parallel to the east-west streets. The scale of such a large commercial district—roughly equivalent to 82 city blocks—again revealed the ambitious future city founders envisioned for Austin.

The Waller Plan contained other distinctive features that accommodated planned civic-related functions and activities. The four public squares, for example, created open spaces within each of the city's quadrants. The plan also included half blocks for churches, a market, and county courthouse and jail, as well as entire city blocks for education (identified on the map as *University* and *Academy*). The city's southeast corner was reserved for an armory and an area for a hospital was set aside at the northeast corner. Although most of these blocks were later developed as planned, the four-block area set aside for the penitentiary at city's the southwest corner never came to fruition. The prison was instead built in Huntsville. Waller (presumably) named most of the east-west streets for native trees and the north-south streets for Texas rivers. Notable exceptions to this street-naming system included Congress Avenue, which terminated at Capitol Square, and College Street, which extended to the land on the west side reserved for educational purposes. Streets along the city's perimeter were named for the cardinal directions; North, East, South, and West avenues.



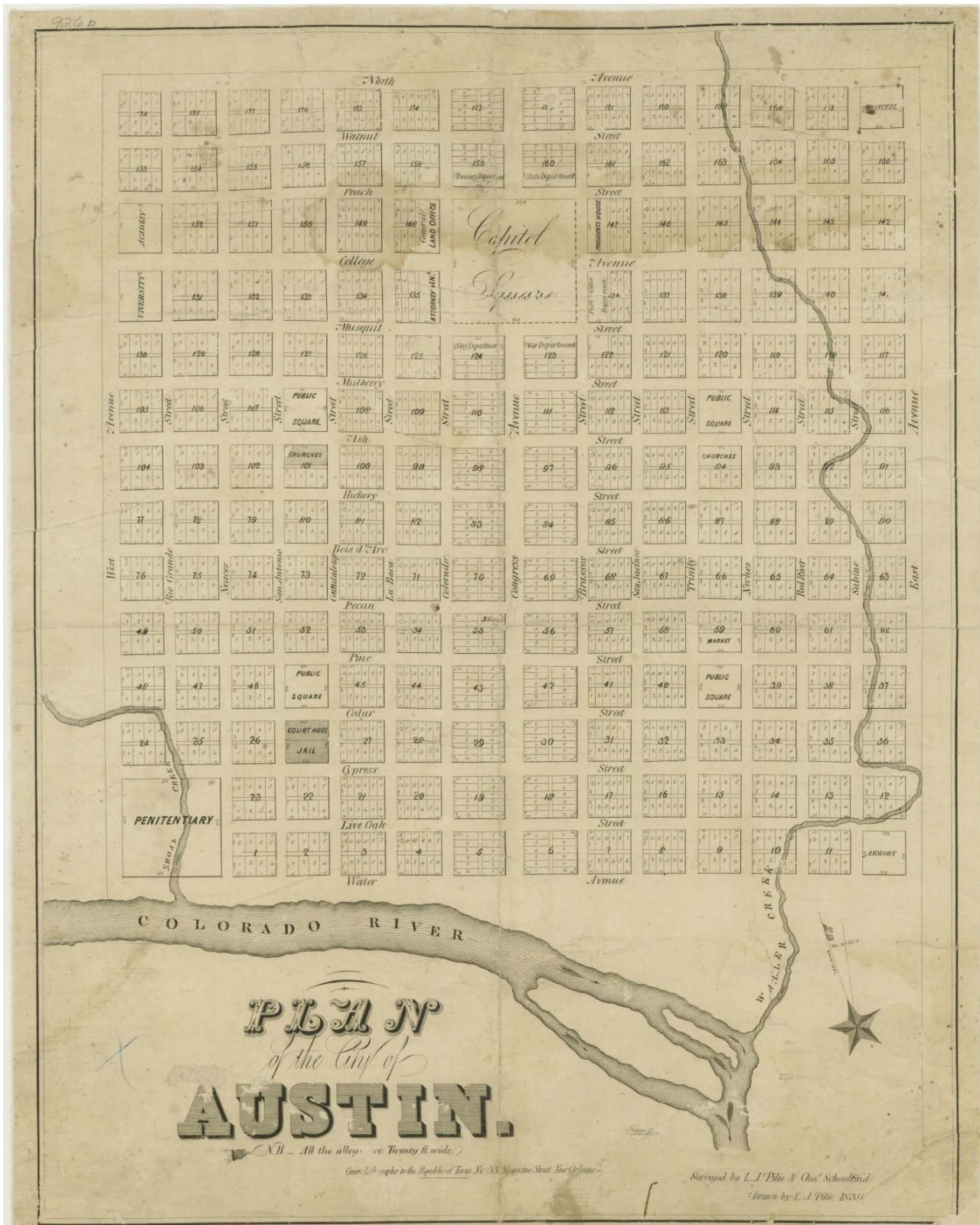
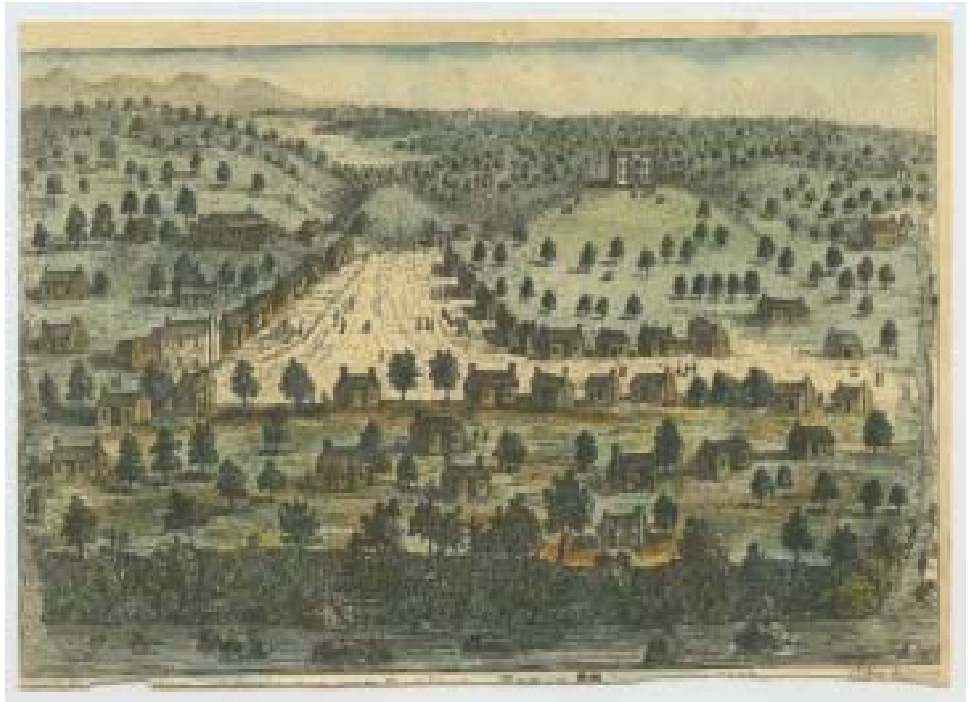


Figure II-4. L. J. Pilie, *Plan of the City of Austin*. Surveyor Pilie drew this map for the Republic of Texas. He, along with Charles Schoolfield, surveyed the area for Edwin Waller. This plan served as the blueprint for Austin's initial development; the patterns established at the time still define the physical character of Austin's city center. Moreover, many of the blocks identified for specific functions still contain buildings that show this town plan's enduring quality. Source: Texas State Archives and Library Commission.

A book, entitled *Texas in 1840, or The Emigrant's Guide to the New Republic*, includes a lithograph (*figure II-5* below) depicting conditions at the time of the city's founding. The image shows Congress Avenue as the focal point, lined with a series of buildings. Except for a clear path that extends to the east (the road to Bastrop), no other streets are shown. Most buildings appear to be of log construction, one-story structures with side-gabled roofs, exterior chimneys at each end. Many also seem to have a large middle opening suggestive of a dog trot, a common domestic form of Texas's early settlement era; they typically faced southeast to take advantage of prevailing winds. The Capitol Square remained vacant and undeveloped, and the largest building is the President's House, which occupied a hill overlooking the city.

Figure II-5. This image captures conditions at the time of Austin's founding and looks north-northwest from a vantage point at the Colorado River. The President's House, a two-story structure with a two-story partial-width front porch, is right of center on a hill overlooking the city. It stood near the site of present-day St. David's Episcopal Church at East Seventh and San Jacinto Streets. The original capitol is the large one-story building left of center, just west (left) of Congress Avenue. The capitol is shown to be an elongated building with a low-pitched side-gabled roof. The lithograph also shows the two-story Bullock Hotel, an important landmark in the frontier community, at the northwest corner of Congress Avenue and Pecan (6th) Street. Source: DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University.



### 1.1.3. WILLIAM SANDUSKY ESTABLISHES AUSTIN OUTLOTS

In 1840, the Republic continued efforts to create a capital befitting its grand vision and hired newly arrived draftsman William Sandusky to survey the approximately 7,100 additional acres that remained within the government reservation (*figure II-6*, to follow). Sandusky, an Ohio native, had come to Texas in 1838, and eventually settled in Austin where he briefly served as Lamar's personal secretary.<sup>13</sup> As early as 1840, he advertised his services as a "draughtsman," working near the General Land Office.<sup>14</sup> Sandusky quickly set about the task of creating a map that would provide the framework for the city's later growth. This area included land on three sides of the original town (the Colorado River was a physical barrier to the south) and extended west into the hill country and well into the Blackland Prairie belt to the north and east. Deed and other cadastral records refer to this expansive area as "The Reserve according to a topographical map of the Government Tract Adjoining the City of Austin by William Sandusky" or simply the "Sandusky Plan." For the



purposes of this context, this area will be referred to as the “Sandusky Plan” or the “Austin Outlots.”



Figure II-6. William H. Sandusky (copied by Robert Reich, 1863 and Waller K. Boggs, 1891), A *Topographical Map of the Government Tract Adjoining the City of Austin*. The Sandusky Plan or Austin Outlots established the framework for the city's growth outside the original one-square-mile plan developed by Edwin Waller. Source: General Land Office.



Although far less heralded in published histories of Austin than the Waller Plan, the Sandusky Plan has nonetheless had an enduring influence on the city's subsequent development: it dictated how and where the city grew over a very large area for the next half century. Moreover, the general layout, orientation, and street network of today largely adhere to this configuration, and city expansion in intervening years can rightly be described as a continuation and extension of patterns established in 1840. Thus, the Sandusky Plan set the stage for Austin's patterns of growth and affected the creation and delineation of the city's older neighborhoods. This area encompasses land that extends from as far west as Lynn Street, as far north as 45th Street, and as far east as Springdale Road. Most land in the Austin Outlots has subsequently been subdivided, reconfigured, and designated as part of new additions and subdivisions, but the overall scheme follows the configuration established with the Sandusky Plan of 1840.

The Austin Outlots share some of the qualities and features of the Waller Plan; however, the layout has eight separate components (or "Divisions"), each of which displays its own characteristics. Each division uses a grid-like configuration, but some extend over an irregularly shaped area and oftentimes conform to topographical features of the affected landscape. While Division E, the four-block-deep extension beyond North Avenue (15th Street), continued the grid of the original townsite, the other divisions deviated from this layout and had different schemes, layouts, and orientations.

Besides influencing development patterns, the Sandusky Plan also played a critical role in the evolution of the road network extending into and out of Austin. The most important roadway for the early settlement period was the road to Bastrop, which generally followed the Colorado River. Bastrop predated Austin and was on the Old San Antonio Road (El Camino Real) and was the primary route for early Austin pioneers to get to San Antonio. Other important streets whose origins evolved from the Sandusky Plan include present-day Manor Road, East Martin Luther King, Jr. (MLK) Boulevard, East 12th Street, East 7th Street, Duval Road, Speedway, Red River Street, Springdale Road, Duval Street, Guadalupe Street, Lamar Boulevard (above MLK Boulevard), Enfield Road and Lake Austin Boulevard. All of these streets extended along rights-of-way or Outlot boundaries delineated in the Sandusky Plan.

#### 1.1.4. EARLY SETTLEMENT SOUTH OF THE COLORADO RIVER

The Colorado River was fundamental to Austin's founding, and the idea of a navigable waterway to the Gulf of Mexico loomed in city founders' minds. However, this flood-prone river also hampered development on the south bank and impeded travel to San Antonio and other settlements to the south. During the early years of settlement, the lack of any reliable ferries in the immediate Austin area forced many travelers to follow the road to Bastrop and cross the Colorado River on the Old San Antonio Road. As early as January 1846, however, a ferry service about one mile downstream of Austin "promised travelers that 'crossing at this ferry, considerable distance is saved

between Austin and San Antonio, and travelers will at the same time always be sure of a safe passage across.”<sup>15</sup>

Several land grants on the Colorado River’s south side were issued before Texas’s independence and included the Santiago del Valle, Isaac Decker, and Henry Hill surveys, all of which fronted onto the Colorado River (*figure II-7* on the following page). These lands were used primarily for agricultural purposes but lacked the density and development of Austin proper. Slave owners James Gibson Swisher and James Bouldin were among the earliest and most prominent farmers in the area. Land south of the river lay outside the government reservation and did not have any formalized layout expressly created for urban development, as did the area within the Waller and Sandusky plans. Instead, the underlying structure that affected land development patterns adhered to the aforementioned land grants and adjoining ones such as the William Cannon, Theodore Bissell, and Thomas Anderson surveys.

### 1.1.5. AUSTIN LOSES THE STATE CAPITAL

The Texas Constitution prohibited the president from serving consecutive terms, and Sam Houston succeeded Lamar in the election of 1841. After Mexican troops invaded Texas and briefly occupied San Antonio in March 1842, Houston decided to make the capital once again the city of his namesake. The decision subsequently triggered what came to be known as the Archives War, when Austin citizens thwarted attempts to move the General Land Office and other government records to Houston. Although the cadastral documents remained in Austin, the government operated in Houston and later in Washington-on-the-Brazos.

Despite a promising start, the relocation of the capital to Houston had an adverse effect on Austin’s continued growth and prosperity. The city languished and many of its residents moved elsewhere. The decline of Austin as an urban center did not diminish settlement in other parts of Travis County, which established an agrarian-based economy. The vast majority of these settlers came in part because of the generous land policies of cash-poor but land-rich Texas. Areas west of Shoal Creek remained largely unsettled because of the ongoing threat of raids by Comanche and other tribes. However, the fertile land along the Colorado River and other waterways such as Brushy Creek, Onion Creek, Walnut Creek attracted a growing number of immigrants to the Austin area. On these mostly family-run farms, pioneers typically harvested corn, sweet and Irish potatoes, peas, and other crops for their own consumption. Others established large plantations that relied on slave labor. Some cotton was cultivated but such cash crops were minimal during the early settlement years, and Travis County produced far more significant amounts of wool than ginned cotton.<sup>16</sup>

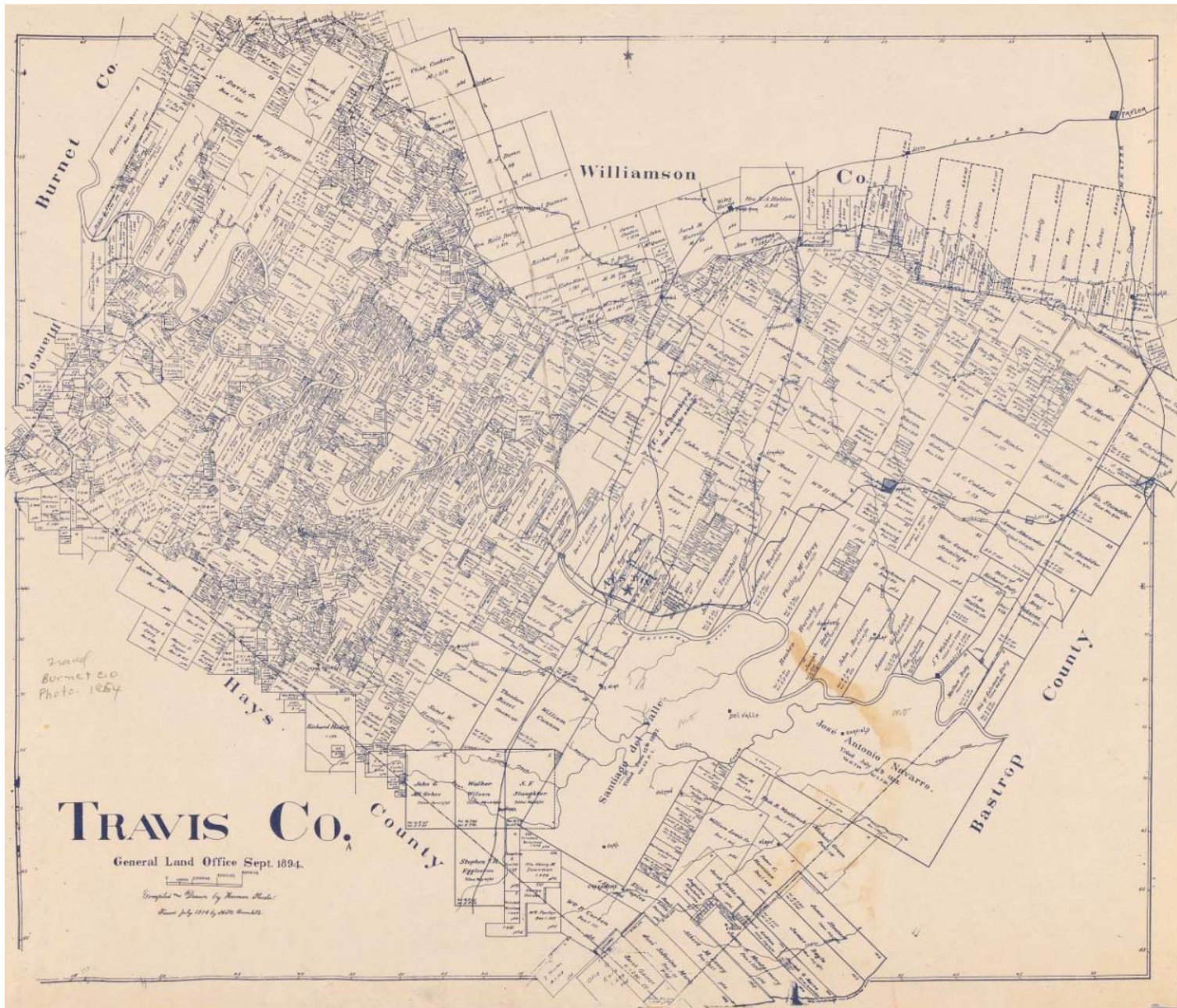


Figure II-7. This map shows early land grants in the area south of the Colorado River, which includes the names of many present-day thoroughfares within the local street network. Subsequent development largely adhered to the orientation of these early land grants. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph492948/m1/1/>; crediting Hardin-Simmons University Library.



### 1.1.6. EARLY ARCHITECTURAL TRENDS OF AUSTIN

Many of these new inhabitants hailed from Southern states and brought with them a culture that reflected their heritage, as revealed by agricultural practices they introduced, the houses of worship and institutions they established, and even the kinds of buildings they constructed for themselves. The “dogtrot,” for example, was a common house form of the early settlement era and was common throughout the South. Its distinctive open hallway was particularly well suited for the Austin area because it allowed cooling breezes to pass through the building and helped occupants to tolerate hot and humid summers (as shown previously in *figure II-5*). Chimneys were placed at the end to minimize the amount of heat radiating from fires used for cooking. This elongated linear arrangement of rooms endured during the early settlement period, but over time, the open “dogtrot” was enclosed and the hallway became more narrow. (See the *Property Types* section in *Volume I* for more information on architectural forms still extant in the East Austin survey area.)

Since most early settlers lacked the financial means to purchase milled lumber and the logistics of transporting such building materials remained problematic, most residents typically built hand-hewn log cabins. Over time, however, Austinites began constructing more refined buildings of higher quality materials. A notable example is the French Legation, which was built in 1841 for Alphonse Dubois de Saligny, the *chargé d'affaires* of the French government (*figure II-8*). Built from lumber hauled from a Bastrop mill, the

Figure II-8. French Legation, photographed by S. B. Hill, ca. 1891. The French Legation is an important local landmark and is regarded as Austin’s oldest extant building. The building’s design, atypical for Austin, has been attributed to Thomas William “Peg Leg” Ward, who worked as a builder with his father in his native Ireland. Ward immigrated to the United States when his father’s business struggled. He first settled in New Orleans but later came to Texas during the fight for independence. He eventually moved to Houston where he designed the capitol of 1837, a two-story structure with New Orleans/Creole stylistic influences similar to the French Legation built four years later in Austin. Williams came to Austin in 1839 and served as the second commissioner of the General Land Office. Although Dubois de Saligny never lived in the house, it is still known as the French Legation. Joseph and Lydia Lee Robertson acquired the house in 1848, and it remained within the family for a century before it was conveyed to the State of Texas. The Daughters of the Republic of Texas are current stewards of the property. Source: Mabel H. Brooks photograph collection, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.



house overlooks downtown from a hill in East Austin (for more information, see the East Austin historic context). Wood was not the only material used in early construction. Locally quarried limestone was a popular material for some of Austin’s earliest buildings due to its abundance and relative ease with which it could be hewn and crafted. In later years, clay mined from the present-day

sites of Austin High School and Zachary Scott Theater provided the raw material for the manufacture of brick.<sup>17</sup>

### 1.1.7. THE CAPITAL OF TEXAS RETURNS TO AUSTIN

In December 1844, Anson Jones officially succeeded Sam Houston as President of the Republic, and selected Austin to be the site for a constitutional convention to consider annexation into the United States. Delegates approved annexation, and Texas officially joined the United States on December 31, 1845. On February 16, 1846, the First Legislature met in Austin and delegates decided to keep the state capital in Austin on a provisional basis until a statewide referendum could be held in 1850. When the election was held, Austin received widespread support and easily surpassed vote totals for Tehuacana, Palestine, Huntsville, and Washington-on-the-Brazos.<sup>18</sup>

The same year as the 1850 capital vote, Austin and the rest of Texas participated in their first decennial census as a state. The results provide a glimpse into conditions in the city at that time. Of Austin's 629 residents, all but one is listed as "White." No slaves are reported, although the city had one "free colored" resident. In contrast, the census for Travis County tallied 2,336 whites, 11 "freed colored," and 791 slaves. In the rest of Travis County, the relatively high percentage of slaves outside of Austin suggests the influx of cotton-based plantations in portions of the county. See *Table II-1* below for a detailed breakdown of census tallies.

Table II-1. 1850 Census: Austin and Travis County.

Area	Whites			Total "Freed Colored"			Total "Slaves"			Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
Travis County	1,309	1,027	2,336	5	6	11	404	387	791	3,138
City of Austin	370	258	628	0	1	1	0	0	0	629

Source: The Seventh Census of the United States: 1850. J. D. DeBow, Superintendent of the United States Census. Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer.

### 1.1.8. THE CONSTRUCTION BOOM OF THE 1850S

Following the statewide vote designating Austin to be the capital, the ensuing decade ushered in an era of renewed growth and prosperity that transformed the frontier settlement into a bustling and vibrant city with new houses, stores, institutions, and government buildings. Most construction activity occurred within the original one-square-mile town site established by Waller. Up until that time, the Texas Legislature continued to meet in a one-story, wood-frame building on the site of present-day City Hall since the state lacked the finances to construct a more permanent seat of government. However, the Compromise of 1850, which dealt with the issue of slavery in lands the United States attained in the war with Mexico, proved to be a key factor in the construction of a new capitol building and other state buildings. A provision awarded Texas \$10 million for giving up claims to lands east of the Rio Grande, which included parts of present-day New Mexico, Colorado, Wyoming, and Kansas. While most of the funds were used to pay off public debt, the State used some of the remaining monies for the construction of public buildings,



including the Land Office, Treasury Building, Governor’s Mansion, and most notably, the state capitol.<sup>19</sup>

### 1.1.8.1. Public Buildings

Completed in 1853, the capitol overlooked Congress Avenue and conveyed a sense of permanence to Austin’s recently confirmed status as the state capital. It was built of locally quarried limestone in the Greek Revival style.<sup>20</sup> Its classically proportioned lines and relatively high level of craftsmanship—as perceived at the time—instilled a sense of pride among all Texans (*figure II-9*). The capitol also inspired local residents to construct buildings that exhibited greater and more sophisticated stylistic ornamentation and embellishment, many of which remain today.

Figure II-9. The State Capitol Building was constructed in the middle of Capitol Square, as Edwin Waller laid out in his town plan. The building’s designers, A. N. Hopkins and John Brandon, were not formally trained architects and likely relied on architectural pattern books for guidance. As Texas prospered in later years, state officials contemplated a replacement that better represented the state’s vibrant economy and growing stature. One local reporter wrote that it “a startling resemblance to a large sized corn crib with a pumpkin for a dome.” As efforts were underway to build a new structure, the Capitol burned in 1881, and was subsequently replaced. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht125141/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



The General Land Office Building of 1857 was another important architectural landmark of the period, and its imposing scale symbolized the importance of Texas’s most valuable asset at the time: land. The agency originally occupied a building that was constructed in 1851 on the west side of Capitol Square. However, it soon proved inadequate and was replaced in 1857 by the Romanesque Revival style edifice that remains today at the capitol grounds’ southeast corner (*figure II-10*, to follow). Its designer, Christoph Conrad Stremme, was a Prussian-born architect with formal training and experience.<sup>21</sup> Because of its strategic location and massive height and scale, it too became a distinctive Austin landmark.

Other state institutions and agencies that built new facilities in Austin included the State Insane Asylum (Texas State Hospital), the State Asylum for the Blind, and the Texas Deaf and Dumb Asylum (Texas School for the Deaf). The

Figure II-10. General Land Office Building, photographed in 1894. Christoph Conrad Stremme designed this building 1857. Born in Hanover, Prussia (Germany), Stremme studied architecture at University of Sciences and the Academy of Arts and Architecture in Berlin. He was among a large number of German immigrants who came to Texas at a time when political turmoil spread through much of Europe, including modern-day Germany. He came to Texas to assist with the survey of the boundary with Mexico and eventually settled in Austin where he worked at the General Land Office. He also provided the design for the State Lunatic Asylum (State Hospital) in 1857. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph124045/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



construction of asylums was part of a nationwide reform movement throughout the 1800s, and the National Park Service has recognized the significance of this movement by listing over 100 similar institutions across the nation in the National Register.<sup>22</sup>

### 1.1.8.2. High style Private Buildings of the 1850s

The 1850s construction boom extended to the private sector, likely as a result of the statewide vote to keep the capital in Austin. The person most associated with the construction boom of the period was master builder Abner Cook, who designed and constructed some of the city's finest Greek Revival style residences. Notable examples include Woodlawn (1853), Neill-Cochran House (1853), the Governor's Mansion (1854–1856; *figure II-11* below), and

Figure II-11. An early rendering of the Governor's Mansion. Abner Cook built houses for most of Austin's elite during the 1850s. A native of North Carolina, he came to Austin in 1839. He helped with the construction of several buildings but received a commission to design and build the State Penitentiary in Huntsville in 1848. The project helped catapult his businesses and he subsequently constructed a number of impressive residences in the Greek Revival style. He was involved in the design and/or construction of most of the important public and private buildings in Austin through the 1870s. The Governor's Mansion is among his best-known works. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph124114/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, APL.



Westhill (1855) among others. Ecclesiastical architecture also reflected greater sophistication, as exemplified by the Gothic Revival style Saint David's Episcopal Church (1853–1854). The Sampson-Hendricks Building (1859) on Congress Avenue was a three-story Greek Revival style building that set a new bar in commercial architectural design for the period. All of these buildings remain and are listed in the National Register, either on an individual basis or as part of a historic district.

### **1.1.8.3. The Enduring Popularity of Vernacular and Folk Architecture**

While these stately edifices represent the city's elite and powerful, they were certainly not the only buildings constructed during the period. In fact, most structures of the era were far more modest in scale and size and displayed minimal amounts, if any, stylistic ornamentation. For example, Frances Trask, an early Austin educator, is believed to have constructed a one-story dwelling in the 1850s on the site of the present-day Austin Convention Center.<sup>23</sup> Its rubble limestone construction and side-gabled roof typified a locally common domestic form that remained popular through much of the mid-1800s. The Moore-Hancock complex in present-day Rosedale neighborhood shows how settlers continued to build log cabins, especially in more remote locations in the greater Austin area. The Zimmerman Cabin in north Austin displays distinctive half-timbered (*fachwerk*) construction, a traditional building method used throughout Central Texas by German immigrants. The form was popular in well-known German settlements such as New Braunfels and Fredericksburg.

The influx of people who came to Austin on government-related business contributed to the city's continued expansion and enabled further development of Congress Avenue as a commercial corridor. Austin evolved into a retail hub for the surrounding area and was among the state's most populated urban areas by 1860. Nonetheless, Austin lacked the economic diversity of cities such as San Antonio and Galveston, which thrived on the exchange of goods, services, and trade.

### **1.1.9. AUSTIN AND THE CIVIL WAR**

By the next decennial census (1860), the population of Austin increased to 3,494, which included 977 slaves and 12 "free colored" citizens.<sup>24</sup> (Refer to additional detail regarding population counts in *Table I-2* and *Figure I-6* in *Volume I, Section 2.3.1.*) The census report does not delineate the exact boundaries of what it reported as the City of Austin, but it likely included the original town site and, likely, developed parts of the Outlots. Despite the relatively high number of slaves, the majority of Travis County residents voted against secession in 1861, although the majority of state voters felt otherwise. Texas subsequently joined the Confederacy and fought in the Civil War.

Armed conflict did not reach Austin, but the perceived threat of attack led to the establishment of fortifications in and around the city. Major General John B. Magruder of the Confederate Army constructed a fort in December 1863 to January 1864 near present-day South Congress Avenue and Ben White

Boulevard.<sup>25</sup> Fort Colorado was a small garrison, which reportedly stood near the intersection of present-day Webberville Road and Heflin Lane. Based on the memoirs of Getulious Kellersberger, who laid out Fort Magruder, another small fortification occupied “College Hill,” as identified in the Waller plan near present-day West Avenue and 15th Street.<sup>26</sup> Austin also was a source of supplies for Confederate forces. A cannon foundry operated near the mouth of Waller Creek<sup>27</sup> and the General Land Office building was used as a cartridge factory.<sup>28</sup>

### 1.1.10. THE RECONSTRUCTION ERA IN AUSTIN

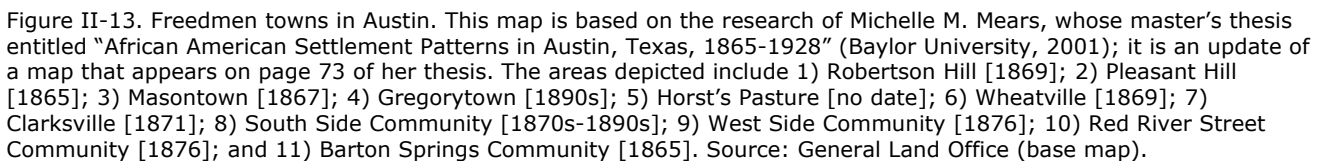
Following the war, Union forces entered Austin and occupied the Governor’s Mansion and other public buildings to restore order and reaffirm federal authority in the city. General George C. Custer, for example, briefly occupied the School for Blind before being transferred out of Austin. Federal occupation continued into the 1870s as the city slowly rebounded (*figure II-12*).

Figure II-12. George Custer and others at the State School for the Blind, 1865. Custer’s stay in Austin was relatively short but he and other federal troops helped to bring stability and order to a community in strife. He occupied the School for the Blind while overseeing federal troops who occupied Austin soon after the Civil War. Source: Humphrey and Crawford, *Austin: An Illustrated History* (Custer [now Little Big Horn] Battlefield National Monument).



Among the most significant aspects of the war’s aftermath that affected Austin’s history and development was the establishment of freedmen towns. As the name suggests, the communities were founded and comprised of former slaves. With their new freedom, these formerly enslaved African Americans established their own settlements in both rural and urban settings, sometimes in proximity to their former owners. This trend extended to Austin and resulted in the establishment of freedmen communities in all parts of the city (*figure II-13*, to follow).





While many of these freedmen communities—such as Pleasant Hill, Masontown, and Robertson Hill—developed in Outlots on the city’s east side, others developed in north, central, west, and south Austin. They typically developed in less-desirable locations, often in low-lying areas prone to flooding. Although the existence of the freedmen towns throughout the city would suggest a degree of integration, they were in fact small nodes in an otherwise segregated city. Notably, they established their own churches that became focal points within each community. (Reference *Volume I, Sections 2.3 and 2.4.2.1* in the *East Austin Historic Context* for more information on freedmen communities in Austin.)

<sup>1</sup> Merle Weir and Diana J. Kleiner, “West Columbia,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 3, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hgw03>.

<sup>2</sup> David C. Humphrey and William W. Crawford, Jr., *Austin: An Illustrated History* (Sun Valley, California: American Historical Press), 23; John G. Johnson, “Capitals,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 03, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/mzc01>.

<sup>3</sup> Sam A. Shuler, “Stephen F. Austin and the City of Austin,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* LXIX, no. 3 (1966), 275.

<sup>4</sup> “A Guide to the Austin City Lots and Outlots Records, 1839-1890; 1957” Texas Archival Resources Online, accessed June 8, 2016, <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/txglo/00012/glo-00012.html>. With the exception of the Neil and Vandever tracts, the other surveys mentioned originally were within an eight-league Mexican title issued to Thomas J. Chambers. Since the title had never been filed, the General Land Office considered the Chambers survey to be vacant and unappropriated land.

<sup>5</sup> John W. Reps, *Town Planning in Frontier America* (Columbia, Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 1980), 213.

<sup>6</sup> P. E. Peareson, “Reminiscences of Judge Edwin Waller,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, IV, no. 1 (1900): 45; Ernest William Winker, “The Seat of Government of Texas,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* X, no. 3 (1907), 227.

<sup>7</sup> P. E. Peareson, “Reminiscences of Judge Edwin Waller,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, IV, no. 1 (1900): 45.

<sup>8</sup> Winker, 225-227.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 234.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 231, 232.

<sup>11</sup> As noted by John W. Reps in *The Making of Urban America: A History of City Planning in the United States* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), William Penn used the gridiron to layout Philadelphia in 1682, but most colonial cities typically evolved in a more organic pattern. By the early 1800s, cities such as New York, as exemplified by the 1811 Commissioners’ Plan, increasingly adopted the grid as a town-planning scheme.

<sup>12</sup> Reps, *Town Planning in Frontier America*, 16, 19, 106.

<sup>13</sup> “A Guide to the William H. Sandusky Papers, 1838-1894,” *Texas Archival Resources Online*, accessed June 8, 2016, <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/drtsa/00118/drt-00118.html>. Sandusky later served as personal secretary to President Lamar but resigned for health reasons. He moved to Galveston and was involved with preparing city plans and maps until his untimely death in 1847.

<sup>14</sup> G. K. Teulon, *The Austin City Gazette* 1, ed.1 (Austin, Texas), September 23, 1840, September 23, 1840, accessed June 9, 2016, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth80005/ml2/>.

<sup>15</sup> Austin History Center, “Austin Beginnings, An Exhibit of Memorable Austin Firsts: Transportation,” accessed June 9, 2016, <http://www.austinlibrary.com/ahc/begin/trans.htm>; William R. Scurry and J. W. Hampton, eds., *Texas State Gazette* (Austin, Texas), Vol. 5, No. 22, Ed.1, Tuesday, January 17, 1854, accessed June 9, 2016, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth81118/>.

<sup>16</sup> J. D. DeBow, Superintendent of the United States Census, *The Seventh Census of the United States* (Washington: Robert Armstrong, Public Printer, 1850), 514-517.

<sup>17</sup> Diana J. Kleiner, “Elgin-Butler Brick Company,” *The Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed August 2, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/dlegk>.

<sup>18</sup> Humphrey and Crawford, 35-36.

<sup>19</sup> Hafertepe, 56.

<sup>20</sup> The limestone used in the construction of the capitol came from a quarry about six miles northwest from the building site within the present-day neighborhood of Allandale. A historical marker at the site states that the land where the quarry operated was owned by George W. Davis. The site is now part of the Beverly S. Sheffield Northwest District Park.

<sup>21</sup> Hafertepe, 125.

<sup>22</sup> National Park Service, “Spreadsheet of NRHP List (listings up to July, 2015 - Includes links to pdfs),” accessed July 7, 2016,

[https://www.nps.gov/nr/research/data\\_downloads.htm](https://www.nps.gov/nr/research/data_downloads.htm).

<sup>23</sup> The Trask House has been moved from its original location in the 100 block of Neches Street to its present site at the southeast corner of Red River and East 3rd Streets following the construction of the Austin Convention Center, which opened in 1992.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph C. G. Kennedy, *Population of the United States in 1860* (Washington: Government Printing Office), 486. As noted within the *East Austin Historic Context*, the U.S. Census did not include any other distinctions aside from “Slaves” and “Whites.”

<sup>25</sup> McGraw Marburger & Associates, “South Congress Avenue Preservation Plan,” 2002, 5-6. While conducting investigations in support of the widening of Ben White Boulevard in the 1990s, archaeologists with the Texas Department of Transportation attempted to locate the site, but no evidence was found.

<sup>26</sup> Michael Barnes, “Out & About: Austin’s Civil War Forts Galvanize Readers,” *Austin 360*, accessed July 1, 2016, <http://www.austin360.com/news/lifestyles/out-about-austins-civil-war-forts-galvanize-reader/nSt3N/>.

<sup>27</sup> Humphrey and Crawford, 57.

<sup>28</sup> Richard E. Steuart “Gun Manufacturing During the Civil War,” *The Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 30, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/dlg01>.



## 1.2. The Gilded Age in Austin, 1871–1892

The Gilded Age marked a pivotal era in the history of Austin and the rest of the nation. This period, which extended from the 1870s to 1890s, witnessed a particularly dramatic transformation of urban areas, as construction booms reflected the growing wealth of an expanding affluent class. These changes relied heavily on the railroad network's rapid expansion, which increased trade and commerce and enabled goods and people to be transported from coast to coast. This era marked the period in which Austin began to assume its unique identity as the seat of state government and as a center of education.

### 1.2.1. RAILROADS BRING GROWTH AND CHANGE TO AUSTIN

As the Reconstruction Period drew to a close, Austin entered a new chapter in its history when the first railroad reached the city on December 25, 1871, and ushered in an era of unprecedented growth and development. The railroad not only proved to be a boon to area farmers and ranchers who could more easily ship their goods to outside markets, it also provided a cheaper and more efficient means of transporting people, consumer products, and other materials into the city. The resulting connectivity increased trade, and commerce fueled economic prosperity that dramatically transformed the city's physical and architectural character.

When a train with the Houston and Texas Central Railway (H&TC) pulled into Austin for the first time, the event received considerable attention and generated considerable civic pride and enthusiasm (*figure II-14*). As its name

Figure II-14. The H&TC arriving in Austin. The inauguration of the railroad heralded a new era in Austin and brought significant change to the community. Source: University of North Texas, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph124059/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



suggests, the H&TC operated out of Houston and built its line northwest through fertile belts within the Coastal and Blackland prairies. The company trunk line extended through Bryan, Corsicana, and Dallas and continued up to Denison where it connected with the Missouri, Kansas, and Texas Railroad (MKT). As the railroad extended from Houston, the company also purchased the Washington County Rail Road in 1867 and incorporated it into the H&TC

system. The company extended service to Austin via a secondary line from Hempstead in Waller County.

The H&TC entered Austin from the east and initially established its terminus near East Avenue, which marked the eastern city limits, but soon pushed across Waller Creek to Congress Avenue (*figure II-15*). Before it reached the city in eastern Travis County, the railroad generally paralleled the Colorado River's meanderings, but the route took a more westerly shift at a point near present-day Pleasant Valley Road and East 7th Street and followed East Pine (5th) Street. This route followed along the boundary that extended between Divisions A and O in the Sandusky Plan. The fact that the railroad followed this right-of-way underscored the Sandusky Plan's enduring significance and its effect on Austin's growth and development over a quarter-century after its inception.

Figure II-15. A *Topographical Map of the City of Austin*, 1872. This map depicts the city of Austin soon after the H&TC extended service to the capital. The map shows how the railroad respected Waller's original town plan. Although the railroad built tracks to Congress Avenue, the freight depot became the primary hub of activity during the early years of rail service. Although the map also shows a passenger depot between Neches and Trinity street, no such structure was built, apparently, as other maps published in later years suggest. Source: Texas State Archives and Library Commission.



After the H&TC built a freight depot at East Pine (5th) and San Marcos Streets, nearby lots became far more valuable and spurred new construction in the immediate area. Wholesalers, distributors, and lumber yards were among the businesses that took advantage of this strategic location, which quickly became a new focal point within the community. For example, Joseph Nalle, who became one of Austin's most successful businessmen in the 1800s, got his start after establishing a lumber yard near the freight depot, at East Pine (5th) and Brushy Streets.

The rail network's expansion continued after the H&TC reached Austin, and in December 1876, the International–Great Northern Railroad (I–GN) became the second railroad to provide service to the city. Unlike the H&TC, which established Austin as its terminus, the I–GN continued southward first to San Antonio and later to Laredo. Created in 1873 with the merger of the International Railroad Company and the Houston and Great Northern Railroad, the I–GN maintained its general offices in Palestine, Texas. It was later reorganized as the International & Great Northern Railroad. The railroad extended from northeast Texas to markets in South and South-central Texas. The I–GN reached Round Rock earlier in 1876, and as it continued into Travis County, the path generally followed level land along the Balcones Escarpment, ignoring the mostly rectangular-shaped boundaries of the land grants, surveys, and properties in the rural areas through which it was built. As the railroad approached the immediate Austin area and, in particular, the vast land holdings of former governor Elijah M. Pease, the route shifted slightly to avoid clipping the eastern part of Pease's property and thereby isolating the former governor's house from the rest of the city. The I–GN's main trunk bypassed the city center and continued southward to San Antonio; however, the railroad built a spur that entered downtown along West Cypress (3rd) Street. It originally terminated at Congress Avenue but eventually extended eastward where it connected with the H&TC. The arrival of the I–GN linked Austin to a railroad network that extended to St. Louis, Missouri; one of the nation's major commercial and industrial centers of the final quarter of the 1800s. As with the H&TC, areas around the I–GN depot attracted a number of businesses and wholesale operations; however, its proximity to Congress Avenue proved particularly advantageous. Lumberman Charles Millett was among those who benefitted from the railroad and he later built the Millett Opera House (listed in the National Register) at 110 East 9th Street.

The third railroad to serve the city was a local enterprise. Organized in August 1881, the Austin and North Western Rail Road Company planned to link the capital city with the Texas & Pacific Railway Company (T&P) system. The railroad originated in downtown Austin and extended eastward along East Cypress (3rd) Street for three blocks where it made a short northeast bend across the eastern edge of the Waller Plan. As it continued eastward, the tracks paralleled the H&TC line but took a more northerly path a few blocks east of Chicon Street and followed a somewhat meandering path along Boggy Creek. This route largely ignored the Sandusky Plan and generally cut a diagonal path through designated parcels. Despite the company's best efforts to link the railroad with the T&P at Abilene, Texas, it only completed tracks to

Burnet before the company was placed into receivership in 1882. Later reorganized as the Austin and Northwestern Railroad Company (A&NW), this railroad went on to play a significant role in the new state capitol building's construction later in the decade (as discussed in 1.2.3. *A New State Capitol*). The A&NW later was purchased by the H&TC, which itself was integrated into the Southern Pacific rail system.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2.2. IMPACT AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT

The three railroads' arrival over a 10-year period brought profound change to Austin. Rail linked Austin with other cities and markets in the state and nation and spurred growth, development, and expansion. By the mid-1880s, railroads serving Austin had made an indelible print on the city's identity and physical character. A map that accompanied an 1885–86 city directory provides graphic documentation of how the railroads extended through Austin relative to the Waller and Sandusky plans (*figure II-16* on the following page).

By 1882, Austin's railways provided an effective and efficient means of transporting goods and people into and out of the city. This trend typified other communities throughout the state, which experienced rapid growth and development during the post-Reconstruction period. These routes affected land-use patterns throughout Austin, including the downtown—where a warehouse district began to evolve along Cypress (3rd) Street—as well as where and how new neighborhoods developed in other parts of the city. Union Depot's construction at West Cypress (3rd) Street and Congress Avenue brought increased commercial and wholesale activities. Nearby property proved ideal for the warehouses and light industrial concerns dependent upon railroad access. Property near the old H&TC terminus, which previously fulfilled such a role, lost favor in lieu of the more centrally located warehouse district that emerged near Union Depot.

### 1.2.2.1. Changing Demographics and the Arrival of New Citizens

The boom of the early years of rail service brought about other changes. The influx of new residents diversified the city's demographics and contributed to a dramatic population increase (see *figure II-17*, to follow, as well as population counts in *Table I-4* in *Volume I*, *Section 2.4.1.1*). As reported in the 1880 census, Austin's population of 11,013 represented an almost three-fold increase from a decade earlier.<sup>2</sup> The city was predominately white but almost one-third of the population was identified as "colored;" who lived throughout the city oftentimes in freedmen communities. Prior to the Civil War, Austin had a slave population, but after emancipation, the city attracted a number of former slaves from rural areas who settled throughout the city. Many who were domestic workers who lived in alley houses behind their employer's residences, as did others who worked in hotels, restaurants, and other service-dependent businesses. However, many African Americans lived in small pockets of segregated neighborhoods that developed in every part of town. Examples of these pockets include Pleasant Hill, Masontown, and Roberston Hill on the east side; Wheatville on the north side; Clarksville (listed in the *National Register*) on the west side; Red River Street community along Waller



Creek in the city center; and the South Side community, formerly part of the Bouldin Plantation, south of the Texas School for the Deaf.<sup>3</sup>



Figure II-16. Ruben W. Ford, *Revised Map of Austin, Texas*, 1885. This map captures the railroad network by the mid-1880s. It also notes the several “county roads” that linked Austin with other communities and enabled area farmers and ranchers access to outside markets. These roads likewise gained significance over time and include major arterials in our current street network including Lamar Boulevard, Duval Road, Manor Road, Webberville Road, West 6th Street, and South Congress Avenue. Source: Texas Library and Archives Commission.



Figure II-17. *Colonists and Emigrants Route to Texas, International & Great Northern Railroad, 1878.* This map and brochure represent the type of promotional materials railroad companies used to promote their operations and support continued growth in rapidly developing areas of the state. Many new residents arrived in Austin on this and other railroads, which triggered a building boom of new businesses, residences, churches, and other institutions. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph252111/m1/1/>; crediting University of Texas at Arlington Library.

The vast majority of the citizenry (approximately 90 percent) was “native born,” and the “foreign born” included immigrants from Germany, Mexico, Ireland, Sweden, England, Poland, France, Italy, and China.<sup>4</sup> Most immigrants settled in various parts of the city, but some groups congregated together. An enclave of citizens of Mexican descent, for example, settled near Shoal Creek, West Cypress (3rd), and West Live Oak (2nd) Streets (this neighborhood no longer exists). A number of Swedish immigrants moved to an area just beyond North Avenue (15th Street) and East Avenue (IH 35), in Austin Outlots, Division B, on the city’s east side, which eventually became known as Swede or Swedish Hill. The neighborhood still survives, much of it in a historic district listed in the National Register.

#### 1.2.2.2. Augustus Koch’s Bird’s Eye Map of 1873

In January 1873, just two years after the H&TC extended service to Austin, Wisconsin-based mapmaker Augustus Koch visited Austin for the first time and prepared a bird’s eye map of the city (*figure II-18*, on the next page).<sup>5</sup> It now provides a baseline to show how the city evolved after the first railroad reached the city. The map views Austin from an imaginary vantage point just outside the city, looking northeast. Koch depicts Waller’s original grid nestled on level ground between separate sets of hills. The Texas State Capitol overlooks Congress Avenue, which is lined mostly with one- and two-story buildings, including the Sampson and Hendricks building (listed in the National Register) at the corner of West Bois d’Arc (7th) Street and Congress Avenue. A photograph of Congress Avenue before 1875 shows the dense commercial development along the busy thoroughfare (*figure II-19*, to follow).





Figure II-18. (Left) Augustus Koch, *Bird's Eye View of the City of Austin, Travis County, Texas, 1873*. This map presents the earliest comprehensive view of Austin and is remarkable for its accuracy. Its publication reflected a popular trend sweeping the country in the postbellum period. Such maps not only instilled greater civic pride among the residents, they also were used for promotional purposes and boosterism. Today, bird's eye maps such as the one Koch prepared in 1873 are invaluable historical documents that capture moments in time in many urban areas throughout Texas and other states. Koch's 1873 bird's eye view was the first of three bird's eye views he prepared of Austin; it is particularly useful because it reveals much about patterns of development at the advent of the railroad era. Source: Austin History Center.

Figure II-19. (Right) Congress Avenue before 1875. The old state capitol and General Land Office are visible in the background, but the image's focus is on the one- and two-story buildings fronting onto Congress Avenue. The amount of development attests to the city's continued growth as a center of commerce and trade. Some of the buildings have survived and are part of the Congress Avenue Historic District, which is listed in the National Register. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph123956/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



A secondary commercial node extends along East Pecan (6th) Street, which features a metal truss bridge (no longer extant) across Waller Creek, near East Avenue. The existence of the bridge strongly suggests that Pecan Street was



the primary link between the railroad depot and Congress Avenue. With a steady stream of traffic, Pecan Street logically developed into a commercial corridor, although it already boasted several commercial buildings as early as the 1860s (*figures II-20 and II-21*). Pecan Street's development as a commercial thoroughfare largely deviated from Waller's original plan. The delineation of commercial properties along a north-south orientation indicates Waller's intent for commercial development to emanate outward from Congress Avenue; instead, the railroad shifted that orientation to a more L-shaped pattern and redirected growth to the east.

Figure II-20. An early view of Pecan Street, ca. 1866. Pecan Street (now 6th Street) had already begun to evolve as a commercial corridor before the arrival of the railroad. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph123938/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



Figure II-21. Pecan Street, 1879. By the late 1870s, Pecan Street was lined with many masonry commercial buildings that attested to its growing significance as a commercial corridor for traffic coming into downtown Austin from the east. This area continued to develop over time and much of the area lies within a historic district listed in the National Register. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph123939/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



Koch's 1873 map also shows the H&TC railroad and its freight. Other noteworthy features shown on the map important to Austin's pre-Civil War history and development include the state capitol, the General Land Office building east of the capitol, the Governor's Mansion southwest of the capitol, and the French Legation on Robertson Hill, all of which are listed in the

National Register. However, the image also depicts then recently completed landmarks such as the Texas Military Institute, which was built a few years earlier on a hill just west of Shoal Creek (listed in the National Register). A crude bridge extends over the Colorado River at the foot of Brazos Street, and another low-water crossing existed near the mouth of Shoal Creek.

Besides depicting significant buildings and structures, Koch's map captures the level and density of development at the dawn of the railroad era. Most blocks had some type of improvement, and the few empty blocks were mostly beyond North Avenue (15th Street). The city's densest development was along Congress Avenue and East Pecan Street, but other important nodes included East and West Pine (5th) Street. Hilly areas to the west and east of the city proper are shown to be heavily wooded, but some houses appear along East and West College (12th) Street.

The 1873 map confirms Austin's growth and expansion beyond Waller's original town plan. With the obvious exception of Austin Outlot, Division E—which essentially was an extension of Waller's original plan—the remaining Outlots are sparsely developed. The most significant expansion beyond the original town was on the east side (Divisions O and A), where the H&TC railroad had established a depot. Plat maps currently held at the Travis County Courthouse indicate that several Outlots in those divisions, most notably those near the railroad, were subdivided into smaller parcels to better accommodate growth. Over time, this trend continued and extended outward from the railroad and eastward beyond the Waller Plan.

### **1.2.2.3. Sanborn Fire Insurance Maps of Austin**

Just a few months after the I-GN's arrival, the Sanborn Map & Publishing Company printed its first set of fire insurance maps of Austin in June 1877 (*figure II-22*, to follow). The maps provide detailed documentation on many of the city's most significant buildings and other major capital investments. Curiously, the maps do not note the presence of the I-GN Railroad anywhere in the city. The reason for this absence is not known; perhaps the field notes were completed before the I-GN arrived, or perhaps the railroad was so new that only a limited amount of new development had reached the depot near West Cypress (3rd) Street and Congress Avenue. Nonetheless, the Sanborn maps depict the H&TC line on the city's east side and several industrial and warehouses in the vicinity.

The Sanborn maps provide a level of detail that complements Koch's bird's-eye map from four years earlier. Not only do they show building footprints, the Sanborn maps also note usage, number of stories, construction materials, and other physical attributes (canopies, stairs, etc.). Coverage of the 1877 edition of the Sanborn maps extended over a very limited area with the main focus was on Congress Avenue between Cedar (4th) and Mesquite (11th) Streets. The maps confirm that most of the buildings were of stone and brick construction, although a few wood-frame buildings front onto Congress Avenue. The use of more durable and expensive materials clearly indicates the increased confidence of Austin's citizens as well as the city's commercial viability, which engendered a growing sense of optimism.

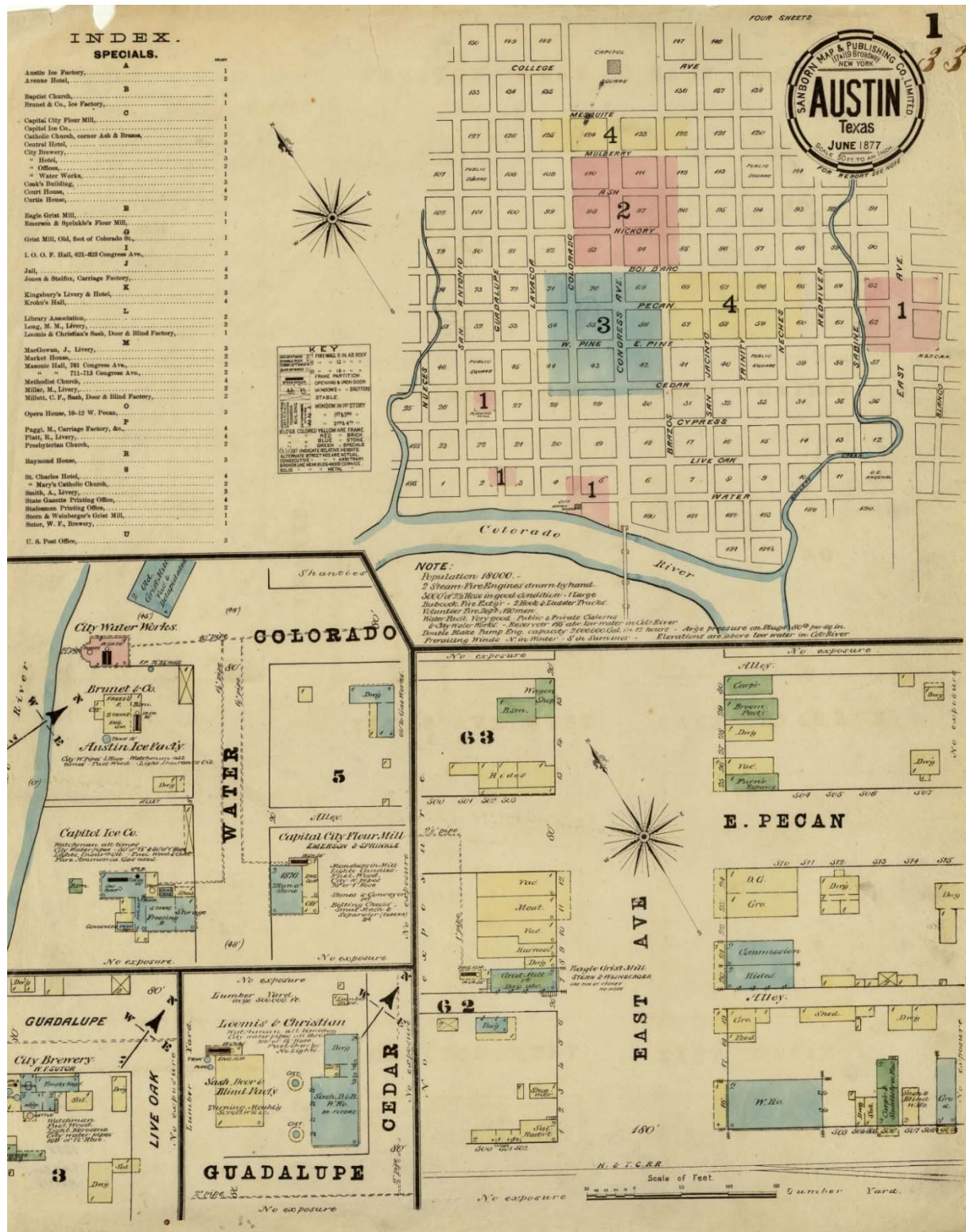


Figure II-22. *Fire Insurance Map of Austin, Sanborn Map and Publishing Company, June 1877*. The first set of Sanborn maps provide valuable information about downtown Austin's physical character. Source: The University of Texas, Perry-Castañeda Library Map Collection.



### 1.2.2.4. A New Generation of Builders

Another sign of Austin's continued maturity and stability was the publication of a new city directory by Mooney & Morrison in 1877–1878. Compared with the previous edition (1871–1872), the business listings suggest an increasingly diversified economy and a growing number of businesses and individuals in the building trade and construction industries (carpenters, masons, etc.).<sup>6</sup> The city directory also includes listings for architects for the first time. The occupation still lacked a formal professional certification process and accreditation; nonetheless, the presence of architects in Austin reflected a building boom and the rising standards and expectations among the city's population. Architect Jacob L. Larmour was particularly prominent at this time; along with his partner Charles Wheelock, he designed the State Lunatic Asylum (Austin State Hospital, 1875), Texas School for the Deaf (1876) and the Travis County Courthouse (1876), as well as many commercial buildings along Congress Avenue.<sup>7</sup> Preston & Ruffini was Austin's other architectural firm. Both principals enjoyed considerable success during their short-term collaboration. Together, they received commissions for many public buildings in the city and state, including the courthouses in nearby Blanco and Williamson counties. After the partnership was dissolved, Jacob Preston designed the Walter Tips Hardware Company Building (1876–77) on Congress Avenue, Allen Hall for Tillotson Institute (1881) and the Driskill Hotel (1886) before relocating to Los Angeles.<sup>8</sup> Frederick Ernst Ruffini designed the Millett Opera House (1878, *figure II-23*) and the Old Main Building at the University of Texas (1882).<sup>9</sup> Continuing a tradition established by master builder Abner Cook during the mid-1800s, these and other subsequent architects working in Austin introduced new forms and styles that enabled the city to compete with other more-established urban centers as showcases of modern and popular architectural movements. This trend had a lasting effect on the city, its physical character, and building stock. Most of their designs were for the city's affluent population, but the designation of Austin as Texas' permanent capital also afforded these designers the opportunity to build impressive facilities for state governmental agencies.

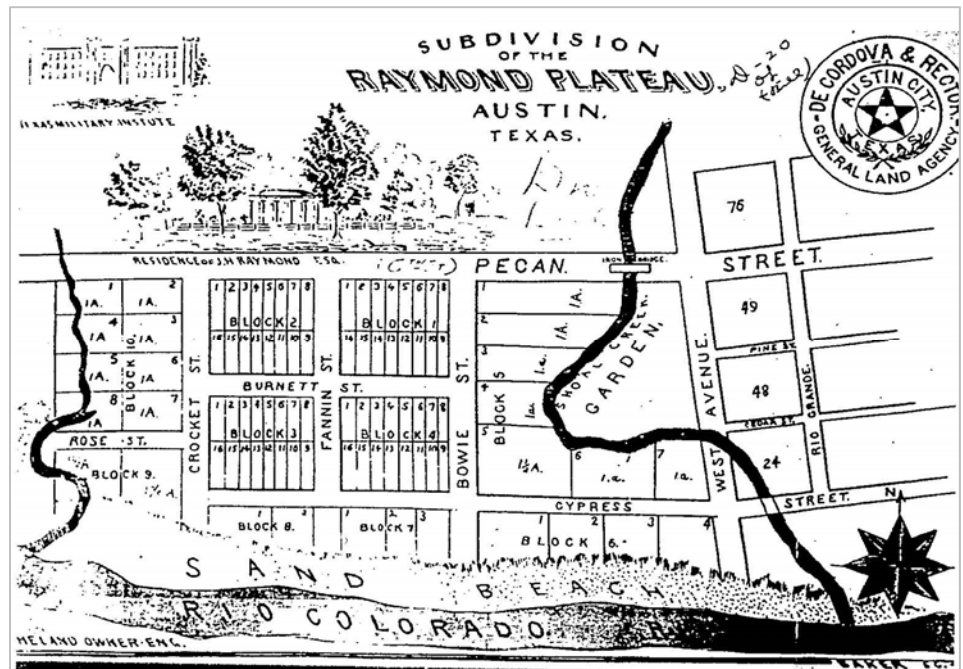
Figure II-23. The Millett Opera House, 1881. Designed by F. E. Ruffini, the Millett Opera House was an important social and architectural landmark during Austin's early railroad era. It was built by Charles Millett, who owned a successful lumberyard business. Profits from his railroad-dependent business enabled him to construct this finely crafted edifice. The building is located on East 9th Street, although it was extensively remodeled in the early 1900s. It is listed in the National Register. Source: Texas State Library and Archives Commission.





While these architects contributed to a greater awareness and appreciation of architectural design, form, and detailing, the many carpenters and others in the building trade living in Austin, likewise built larger and more sophisticated homes for the city's expanding middle classes. The upper class had the financial means to hire masons and other craftsmen to construct stylish houses, often in the original town plat, but also in outlying areas. On the city's west side, for example, new residential developments in Division Z of the Sandusky Plan boasted several impressive dwellings in the Raymond Plateau (figure II-24) and Raymond Heights residential areas.<sup>10</sup> These houses

Figure II-24. The Subdivision of the Raymond Plateau. Filed at the Travis County Courthouse, this plat map shows how land within the Sandusky Plan was subdivided into smaller lots for residential development. It was part of trend that occurred with increasing frequency during the last quarter of the 1800s. This land was developed by James Raymond and is part of the West Line Historic District, which is listed in the National Register. Source: Prewitt and Associates, Inc., *National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form: West Line Historic District* (Washington, D.C.: National Park Service, 2003).

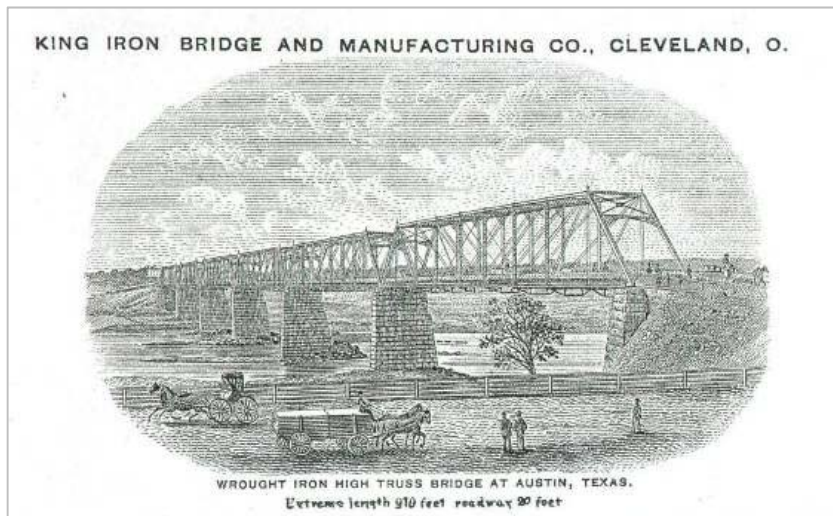


typically occupied large lots; however, further subdivision of the land afforded new house sites for a burgeoning middle class. Many of these were wood-frame houses displaying architectural elements (window and door surrounds, cornice detailing) that could simply be applied as decoration, giving buildings a more stylish appearance. Railroads made this practice possible because they brought new and higher-quality materials to Austin. The pattern continued at an accelerated pace in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Houses for the growing middle class essentially abandoned vernacular or folk traditions and instead presented a more homogenous character with more national styles, oftentimes relying on pattern books available at the growing number of lumberyards operating in the city. Even houses built for those of modest means, which typically continued to rely on traditional forms, tapped into the growing inventory of better building materials at more reasonable prices.

Although much of the city's growth at that time occurred in areas largely defined by Waller and Sandusky, Austin also expanded to the Colorado River's south side. In 1877, John Milton Swisher—a prominent local banker, financier, and businessman who also served as president of the first (mule-drawn) streetcar line—filed a plat for the Swisher Addition in 1877. Just south of the Texas Deaf and Dumb Asylum (Texas School for the Deaf), the addition fronted

on the road (South Congress Avenue) that linked Austin and San Antonio. The Swisher Addition represented the city's continued expansion and opened an entirely new land for development. The addition's viability was only possible after the construction of a bridge in 1876 spanning the Colorado River at Congress Avenue.<sup>11</sup> Replacing a crude pontoon bridge that was far less reliable, the structure was the first of a series of bridges over the waterway that linked South Austin to the city proper (*figure II-25*). The Congress Avenue Bridge facilitated increased activity between Austin and southern Travis County, helped make additional property available for development, and led to the city's further expansion; trends that accelerated in subsequent years.

Figure II-25. Pontoon Bridge, 1860s (top right) and the Colorado River Bridge (bottom), undated. These photographs show the structures that linked Austin with lands on the Colorado River's south side. John Swisher, who platted the first subdivision in South Austin, was one of the financial backers of this temporary bridge facility on the Colorado River. The King Bridge Company was a very successful Cleveland, Ohio-based company that constructed metal truss bridges throughout the country. The company used this engraving of the bridge in Austin as a marketing tool. Source: Austin History Center and King Iron Bridge Company.



### 1.2.3. A CONSTRUCTION BOOM OF PUBLIC BUILDINGS

As the railroad spurred growth, commerce, and trade during the 1870s and 1880s, public and elected officials at the federal, state, and county levels requested new buildings for these operations. These buildings reflected the increasingly important role that public institutions played in Austin. The resulting construction boom provided new opportunities for architects, builders, and contractors to showcase their talents and expertise. These professionals understood the symbolic nature that well-designed buildings

meant to Austin's image and its residents. Whereas the first public buildings that Edwin Waller and his crew erected were crude and simple structures reflective of harsh conditions and frontier setting, this new wave of government buildings exhibited fashionable and high-style architectural tastes popular in older, larger, and more established cities in Texas and the nation. These buildings exerted a great influence on the city's physical character and introduced new forms and styles that inspired many residents, who adapted these forms in varying degrees in the construction of their homes, stores, and houses of worship.

### 1.2.3.1. U.S. Post Office and Federal Building

During the Reconstruction Era, the federal government in Austin was most closely associated with military occupation, as Texas and the rest of the South slowly healed from the Civil War. General George C. Custer was among the military officers stationed in Austin, albeit briefly (he resided at the former School for the Blind, which is now part of Heman Sweatt Campus [Little Campus] at the University of Texas). The gradual removal of federal troops over the years meant that the post office became Austin's most visible and tangible link to the federal government.

By 1877, work began on the new post office to serve a growing population that also reflected Austin's growing stature within the state. Based on the design of John G. Hill, supervising architect of the U.S. Treasury, the building was constructed at the northeast corner of Colorado and West Pecan (6th) Streets under the supervision of builder Abner Cook. The downtown location, one block west of Congress Avenue, was near the city's commercial heart and center of activity. The project was a protracted one and took years to build, but when completed in 1881, the Post Office and Federal Building was an architectural gem and an impressive symbol of the federal government (*figure II-26*).<sup>12</sup>

Figure II-26. S. B. Hill, photographer, Post Office building, Austin, ca. 1881. The Post Office and Federal Building was constructed from 1877 to 1881. This image, which shows the building nearing completion, is looking northeast from a vantage point on the opposite (south) side of West Pecan (Sixth) Street. The building is one of the city's best and earliest examples of the Renaissance Revival architectural style. The Post Office and Federal Building is now owned by the University of Texas system and is known as O'Henry Hall. It is listed in the National Register: Source: Texas State Library and Archives Commission.





### 1.2.3.2. State Government Investments in Austin

Austin's designation as the state capital in 1850 remained provisional and subject to yet another statewide vote scheduled to be held in 1870. After a two-year delay, the election was finally held and Texas voters affirmed their desire to keep the capital in Austin. This vote resolved the issue permanently, and the results triggered a state-sponsored construction boom that demonstrated Austin's importance as the capital and as the home of other state-funded operations and agencies.

#### 1.2.3.2.1. CONSTRUCTION OF THE NEW STATE CAPITOL

The permanent selection of Austin quickly triggered talk of a new capitol building. The existing 1853 capitol, which famed New York landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted had previously described as “a really imposing building” had not aged well or gracefully. It paled in comparison with other state capitals.<sup>13</sup> The state lacked the financial resources to pay for a new building and the idea languished. The Constitution of 1876 advanced the idea when it set aside three million acres of state-owned land to fund the construction of a new capitol, but action on the idea proceeded slowly. In 1879, the Texas Legislature passed a bill to create the Capitol Board comprised of the state's executive elected officials to oversee the project. As these efforts were underway, a fire in November 1881 gutted the old State Capitol (*figure II-27*), and a temporary statehouse was built nearby at the southwest corner of Mesquite (11th) Street and Congress Avenue.<sup>14</sup>

Figure II-27. The old state capitol burned on November 9, 1881, which accelerated the construction of a new building. Although the edifice had become a symbol of Austin, it was built in the early years of the city with a limited supply of skilled craftsmen and building materials. Before the building burned, officials complained about its many problems and inadequacies. Local architect F. E. Ruffini designed a temporary capitol building in the Italianate style that served the state while the current capitol was constructed. It stood at the southwest corner of Congress Avenue and East 11th Street until a fire destroyed it in 1899. The building's foundation is maintained at a site with a state historical marker. Source: Texas State Library and Archives Commission.



For the new structure, the Capitol Board sought an appropriate landmark befitting the Lone Star State and held a nationwide design competition. The group selected the entry of Elijah Myers, a Detroit-based architect, whose proposed plan had been submitted under a pseudonym. He had already enjoyed considerable success and was known mostly for his commissions for public buildings including courthouses in the Midwest and, most importantly,



the Michigan State Capital of 1872. His design for Texas was modeled after the U.S. Capitol and was influenced by the Renaissance Revival style.<sup>15</sup>

The building's construction received considerable attention, as it was monitored by Austin and state newspapers (*figure II-28*). The cornerstone was laid on March 2, 1885, and work continued over a three-year period. The dedication ceremony took place over a five-day period, extending from May 14 to May 19, 1888, although additional work continued for several more months (*figure II-29*).<sup>16</sup> It was an imposing physical and architectural landmark that could be seen for many miles because of its height, grand scale, and strategic hilltop location. The Capitol also accelerated a growing local trend to design and build more opulent and elaborately detailed buildings throughout the city as architects, builders, and carpenters embraced Victorian eclectic tastes.

Figure II-28. (Right) The capitol's construction in 1887 was a massive undertaking, not without controversy. The building was originally to be made of native limestone but instead was built of red granite quarried near Marble Falls. Contractors used the A&NW Railroad to bring the granite to Austin and extended a spur along College (12th) Street to the building site. With state sanction, the contractors used convict labor to quarry the stone, which labor groups considered unfair. Moreover, the contractor brought highly skilled masons from Scotland to build the capitol because granite was a less-pliable material than limestone and more difficult to cut. This act violated federal file and triggered a boycott by U.S. stone cutters. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht124107/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center.

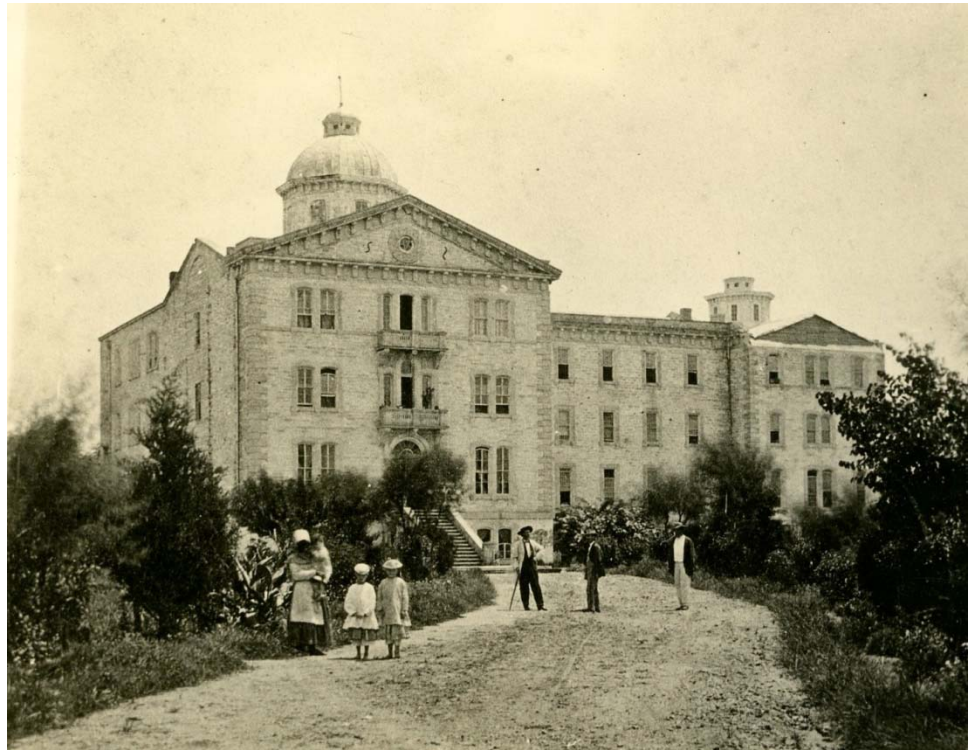


Figure II-29. (Left) Texas Capitol, May 1888. This photograph, taken soon after an open house on April 21, 1888 (San Jacinto Day), captures conditions as work on the building was nearing completion. Rising to a height that exceeded that of the U.S. Capitol, the new Texas State Capitol was the city's tallest building for many decades and its elaborate and finely-crafted detail make it one of Texas's most important buildings. It is listed in the National Register and has been designated as a National Historic Landmark. No other building in Austin is more important, possesses more symbolic value, or is more representative of the city and its history than the state capitol. When completed in 1888, the new capitol became the pride of all Texans, but particularly to the citizens of Austin. Source: Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

### 1.2.3.2.2. OTHER STATE AGENCIES

Other state-supported agencies embarked on construction programs following Austin's permanent designation as the state capital, but on a more modest and less costly scale. Among the projects completed in the 1870s were additions to the Blind Asylum at the corner of Magnolia Street and East Avenue (1875), the State Insane Asylum in north Austin (1875), and the School for the Deaf on the south side of the river (1876). These projects spurred increased development over time and were located on important thoroughfares within the still-evolving local road network. The State Insane Asylum (see *figure II-30*) was on the road to Georgetown and the School for the Deaf was on the road to San Antonio.

Figure II-30. State Insane Asylum, 1873. This photograph shows the main building at the campus as it appeared in 1873. A rendering of the building also appears on Koch's bird's eye map of the same year. Christoph Conrad Stremme, the architect of the General Land Office building near the Capitol, designed this monumental institutional building about 1857. Soon after this photograph was taken, the building was enlarged with a substantial addition. The complex and its expansive campus attracted development to the area, as best illustrated by the establishment of the Hyde Park streetcar suburb in 1891. The grounds associated with the State Insane Asylum became a popular recreational space for Austinites into the 1900s. Source: Mabel H. Brooks Collection, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.



### 1.2.3.2.3. TRAVIS COUNTY COURTHOUSE

During the middle and late 1800s, county governments had the most direct impact of any public entity on Texas citizens' daily lives. The county kept and maintained various legal and tax records and housed judicial functions. Thus, the county courthouse in every county became an important node of activity. Austin was no exception. City founder Edwin Waller originally intended the county courthouse to face onto Republic Square, as shown in his 1839 town plan. The official creation of Travis County and Austin's designation as the county seat a year later created a need for a courthouse. Initially, county government operations took place in a dispersed manner in multiple buildings in the city. The construction of a two-story limestone building in 1856 consolidated county government activities, but its location (on the present-day site of the Austin History Center at 810 Guadalupe Street) was in a less-developed part of the city and proved inconvenient for most residents.<sup>17</sup>

By 1875, the city's and county's explosive growth, and the need for more and better facilities, led Travis County Commissioners to replace its courthouse. Rather than build on the existing site, they chose to build on a far more prominent location at the corner of Congress Avenue and East Mesquite (Eleventh) Street, just across from the state capitol. In a sense, the site was consistent with Waller's original scheme, since he set aside property on blocks facing onto Capital Square to be reserved for government departments.

The commissioners selected local architect Jacob Larmour to design the new courthouse. A native of New Jersey, Larmour arrived in Austin in 1871 and quickly established a successful practice.<sup>18</sup> The Travis County Courthouse was among his most important commissions, and for its design he chose the Second Empire style, which enjoyed considerable popularity locally at the time (*figure II-31*). The building was completed in 1876. He also received multiple commissions for several state institutions mentioned previously (*Section 1.2.3.2.2 above*).

Figure II-31. The Travis County Courthouse occupied a prominent location on Congress Avenue. It was among the many contemporaneous county courthouses in Texas built in the Second Empire architectural style. This style also enjoyed widespread popularity in Austin, as evidenced by multiple houses in the Bremond Block Historic District (listed in the National Register); most notably the John Bremond House at 700 Guadalupe Street. This image, taken in the early 1900s, captures the eclectic design and finely crafted detailing. The building continued to serve the county until 1931, when the current courthouse was completed. The old courthouse was demolished in 1964, and the site is now used as a parking lot. Source: Austin History Center.





## 1.2.4. AUSTIN’S EMERGENCE AS A CENTER OF EDUCATION

Another important theme of the Gilded Age in Austin was the establishment of multiple educational institutions. This trend included both parochial and secular institutions of higher learning, as well as the advent of free public schools for local residents. Many of these schools, academies, colleges, and universities have since become synonymous with Austin itself and trace their beginnings to this era. Graduates provided a pool of increasingly well-trained and -educated talent that produced a dynamic and creative workforce. These institutions enabled the city to become not only the permanent seat of state government but also Texas’ leading center of education. Combined with rail service, these factors largely defined an enduring Austin character.

### 1.2.4.1. Early Education Efforts

City founders demonstrated a strong commitment to education when establishing Austin in 1839. Edwin Waller set aside entire city blocks (“University” and “Academy”) in his 1839 plan, as specified by the Texas Congress calling for Austin’s creation (refer to *figure II-2* in *Section 1.1.1* of this *Citywide Historic Context*). The Sandusky Plan from 1840 provided a much more expansive area with a large tract of land labeled as “College Hill” on the city’s north side, several blocks beyond the capital square (refer to *figure II-6* in *Section 1.1.3* of this *Citywide Historic Context*). However, Austin’s struggles to retain the seat of government for the Republic and later the state, along with limited financial resources, hampered any efforts to realize such the establishment of a public-funded college or university in the city.

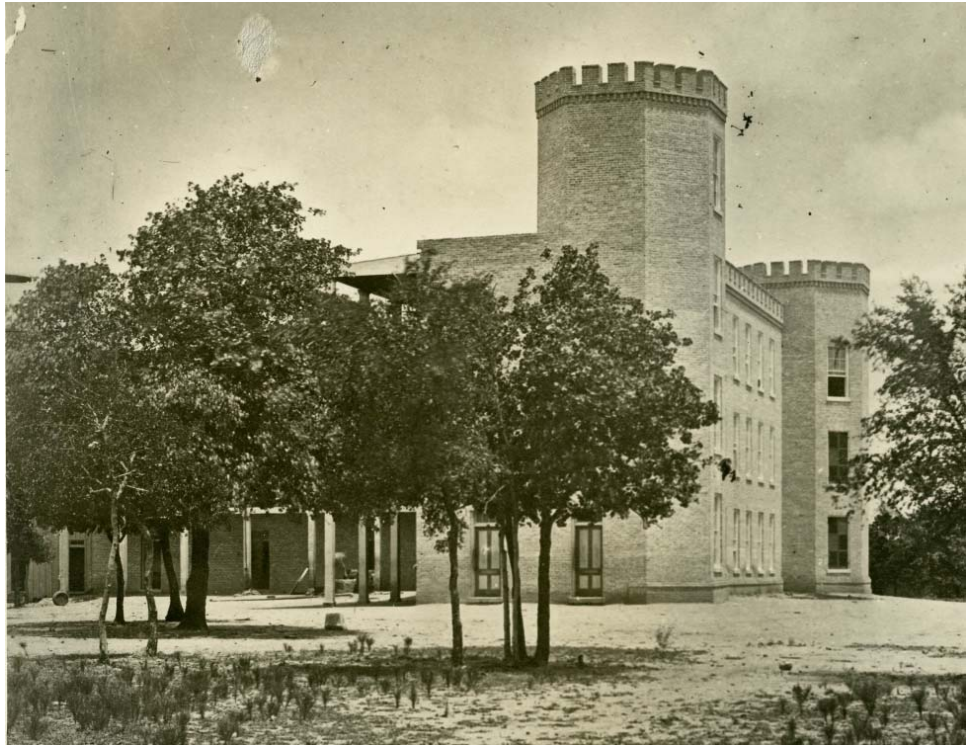
Education during Austin’s formative years was almost exclusively undertaken by religious-affiliated groups or private individuals. Among the earliest was the short-lived Austin Female Academy. G. C. Baggerly, pastor of the First Baptist Church of Austin, opened the school in 1850 at the corner of Guadalupe and Bois d’Arc (7th) Streets; it remained in operation until Baggerly moved to Tyler in 1853.<sup>19</sup> The Reverend B. J. Smith was another educational pioneer in Austin. In 1852, he established the Austin Female Collegiate Institute and later occupied the building previously used by the Austin Female Academy on Guadalupe Street.<sup>20</sup> Smith’s effort proved more successful; he kept the school open until about 1870. The building is now is part of the Bremond Block Historic District.

In the late 1860s, the Bastrop Military Institute made plans to move to Austin, and in 1870 purchased a tract of land from James H. Raymond west of Shoal Creek in Outlot 5, Division Z of the Sandusky Plan. The name was changed to the Texas Military Institute (TMI) and the school constructed a two-story limestone building on a hill overlooking Shoal Creek and the city (*figure II-32*, to follow). With its crenelated parapet, the building quickly became known locally as “the castle.”<sup>21</sup> Modeled after the U.S. Military Academy at West Point, the school emphasized military education and training but also offered instruction in literature and the sciences. TMI remained in operation until 1879, when the president and faculty joined the new Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas, which offered a similar military-based education.<sup>22</sup> After TMI closed, Jacob Bickler, another early educator in Austin,



moved his Texas and English Academy to the site and continued to use it for educational purposes.

Figure II-32. Texas Military Institute, about 1870–1873. The Texas Military Institute was one of Austin's earliest and most important educational institutions. Originally established in Bastrop by R. P. T. Allen in 1858, the school provided a broad range of classes but focused military-related studies. After the move to Austin in 1870, the Texas Military Institute soon boasted an enrollment of about 150 students. After the State of Texas created the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas (now Texas A&M University), the president and faculty moved to College Station and the school closed. Source: Mabel H. Brooks photograph collection, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.



#### 1.2.4.2. Tillotson Collegiate and Normal Institute

Another important educational institution of the postbellum era was the Tillotson Collegiate and Normal Institute (now part of Huston-Tillotson University), which provided educational opportunities for freed slaves after emancipation. The school was named for Reverend George Jeffrey Tillotson, a retired Congregationalist minister from Hartford, Connecticut who worked with the American Missionary Association to establish schools for Blacks in the South and Southwest. Tillotson and his colleague Reverend Gustave D. Pike arrived in Austin 1875, and believed a hill site on the city's east side to be an ideal location for a new college.<sup>23</sup> Using mostly his own funds, Tillotson purchased land for the school on Outlot 7, Division B of the Sandusky Plan on behalf of the American Missionary Association, and subsequently raised additional monies to build and furnish the new facility. He hired local architect Jasper Preston to design a five-story stone and brick edifice in French Second Empire style (*figure II-33, to follow*).<sup>24</sup> Tillotson Collegiate and Normal Institute officially opened on January 17, 1881 and operated out of a single building: Allen Hall. The edifice contained all school-related functions and activities, including classrooms, living quarters for faculty and students, dining and kitchen facilities, and even rooms to conduct religious services. Tillotson quickly became an important educational, social, and architectural landmark, not only within the local African American community but for the entire city.

Figure II-33. Allen Hall, n.d. In 1881, Tillotson Collegiate and Normal Institute began operations in a new building designed by Jasper Preston. He is best known as the architect of the Driskill Hotel, which was built five years later on East Pecan (6th) Street. The school was part of an extensive and privately-funded program to provide new educational opportunities for African Americans living in former slave-holding states. The school provided elementary-, high school-, and college-level classes. Source: *Something of Interest Concerning Austin, the Great Capital of Texas*. Available from the University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph39137/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



### 1.2.4.3. The University of Texas

The adoption of a new state constitution in 1876 called for the creation of a “university of the first class” for the study of literature and the arts and sciences. The new university was to complement the Agricultural and Mechanical College of Texas at College Station created following enactment of the Morrill Land Grant College Act of 1862. The Act enabled federally owned lands to be sold to fund and organize such institutions throughout the nation.<sup>25</sup> Following this model, the Constitution of 1876 allocated one million acres of land in West Texas for the new university. After some delay, the Texas Legislature moved forward with the effort, and in 1881, called for a statewide referendum to decide the location, as stipulated in the Constitution of 1876. The election gave voters the choice to designate separate campuses for the medical and liberal arts programs in different cities or to create a unified campus at one site. Competition quickly became heated, but the cities that gained the most popularity were Austin, Galveston, Tyler, and Waco. In the end, voters approved separate campuses, and while Galveston won the medical school, Austin was chosen for the main campus.<sup>26</sup> The university was built on a 40-acre tract of land identified as “College Hill” in the Sandusky Plan. Austin architect F. E. Ruffini prepared the plans for the main building, a highly ambitious scheme that symbolized the institution’s lofty goals. In developing his plans, Ruffini chose the Gothic Revival style, regarded at the time as at the forefront of academic architectural design (*figure II-34*, to follow). Despite grand intentions, state coffers remained strained and the building was constructed in stages. The west wing was built first and the cornerstone laid on November 17, 1882 (*figure II-35*, to follow). The University of Texas officially opened on September 15, 1883, but classes were held in the temporary capitol building until work was completed in January 1884.<sup>27</sup>





Figure II-34. (Left) Old Main Building, between 1883 and 1889. The opening of the University of Texas heralded a new era for Austin and the state. The institution became the flagship school of higher learning and helped to make Austin a center of education. It was demolished in 1931 to make way for the construction of the Paul Cret-designed “New” Main Building, more commonly known as the UT Tower, completed in 1937. Source: Texas State Library and Archives.

Figure II-35. (Right) University of Texas Old Main Building, no date. The west wing was the first of three phases of construction. Although classes began to be held in September 1883, work on the building continued until January 1884. The midsection, which included the auditorium, was completed in 1889 under the auspices of Bart MacDonald, who adhered to Ruffini’s original design. The east wing’s construction in 1899 by architect J. L. O’Connor marked the building’s completion, which still followed Ruffini’s design. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht125329/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



#### 1.2.4.4. Saint Edward’s College

The next installment of Austin’s development into an educational center was the establishment of Saint Edward’s College (now Saint Edward’s University). Mary Doyle, who owned 398 acres in the Santiago del Valle grant on the Colorado River’s west bank, willed her land to the Catholic Church for the creation of a Catholic college after her death in 1872. Father Edward Sorin, Superior General of the Congregation of Holy Cross, from Notre Dame, Indiana, followed through with the efforts to establish the school. He arranged to acquire an adjoining 123-acre tract of land in the Isaac Decker league from Colonel Willis L. Robards. By 1881, the school had constructed a two-story building on the old Doyle property (east of present-day IH 35, near the

present-day Internal Revenue Service facility), under the moniker Saint Edward's Academy. Four years later, the Texas Legislature charted the school under a more prestigious title, Saint Edward's College. As the school expanded, officials decided to construct new facilities but chose to build on a prominent hill on the adjoining Robards tract. Galveston-based architect Nicholas J. Clayton, who had served as architect of Saint Mary's Catholic Church (listed in the National Register and completed in 1874) on East Mulberry (10th) Street, provided the design for the new facility. As he had done with Saint Mary's Church, Clayton again worked in the "modern" Gothic Revival style. Classes met for the first time in the new facility at Saint Edward's College on September 3, 1889 (*figure II-36*).<sup>28</sup>

Figure II-36. Saint Edward's College, 1894. Nicholas Clayton designed the Gothic Revival style Main Building in 1889. The structure occupied a hill that overlooked Austin to the north, and its height and prominent location in a relatively remote and undeveloped area made it visible for many miles away. The building later sustained extensive damage by fire in 1904 but was rebuilt using Clayton's original design. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph496705/m1/1/>; crediting Texas Historical Commission.



The completion of these institutions of higher learning in the 1880s not only marked Austin's growing reputation as an educational center, which city boosters at the time readily exploited, but they also reflected the city's continued maturity and more diversified economy. While agriculture, commerce, and government still remained the foundation on which Austin continued to develop, the faculty, students, and staff associated with these schools created yet another catalyst for growth and, more importantly, helped to distinguish Austin from the state's more commercial- and industrial-based cities, such as Galveston, Dallas, Waco, and El Paso. The educational traditions created during the late 1800s helped attract people with intellectual curiosity, which remains a character-defining feature of Austin. These schools operated in different parts of the city and served as magnets that encouraged new development in nearby areas. Saint Edward's College was farther removed and in a more isolated location; however, the campuses of the University of Texas and Tillotson Collegiate and Normal Institute were closer to the downtown and state government complex, and new residential growth extended to these hubs.



### 1.2.4.5. Public School System

Improved educational opportunities also extended into the city itself with the establishment of a public school system. Prior to implementation of reforms after Reconstruction, the city relied primarily on private schools and academies. Efforts to operate free public schools were undertaken on a limited basis and enjoyed only marginal success. The Constitution of 1876 underscored renewed interest in education. Several reform-minded business and civic leaders in Austin recognized the opportunity to improve local education and led efforts to build and operate free public schools in the city. In 1880, local voters approved the creation of a public school system, which began operations on September 12, 1881.<sup>29</sup> The 1885–86 city directory lists the schools, which included Austin High School on the block identified as “University” on the Waller Plan (on the same site as Pease Elementary School), and the East Austin Public School (no longer extant) on East Mesquite (11th) Street, between Sabine and Red River Streets. The system also operated other schools elsewhere in the city, typically in areas with the densest concentration of residential neighborhoods. As was traditional throughout much of the nation and particularly the South, Austin’s educational system was segregated by race. Schools for “colored” students operated in Central and East Austin.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>1</sup> George C. Werner, “Austin and Northwestern Railroad” *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 16, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/eqa12>.

<sup>2</sup> *Report on the Social Statistics of Cities, Part II: The Southern and Western States* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1887), 304.

<sup>3</sup> Michelle M. Mears, “African American Settlement Patterns in Austin, Texas, 1865-1928” (master’s thesis, Baylor University, 2001), 33–63. This is an excellent source of information about the history and physical limits of Austin’s freedmen communities and early segregation patterns.

<sup>4</sup> David C. Humphrey and William C. Crawford, Jr., *Austin: An Illustrated History* (Sun Valley, California: American Historical Press, 2001), 82.

<sup>5</sup> “Austin in 1873,” *Amon Carter Museum: Texas Bird’s-Eye Views*, accessed June 15, 2016, [http://www.birdseyeviews.org/zoom.php?city=Austin&year=1873&extra\\_info](http://www.birdseyeviews.org/zoom.php?city=Austin&year=1873&extra_info).

<sup>6</sup> Mooney & Morrison, *Mooney & Morrison’s General Directory Of The City Of Austin, Texas, For 1877-78*, University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/>, crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library, accessed June 16, 2016, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark%3A/67531/metaph46838/>.

<sup>7</sup> Sally S. Victor, “Jacob L. Larmour,” *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 16, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/flaxu>.

<sup>8</sup> Roxanne Williamson, “Jasper N. Preston” *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 16, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fpr25>.

<sup>9</sup> “F. E. and Oscar Ruffini: An Inventory of the Ruffini Collection at the Texas State Archives, [ca. 1877]-1937, undated (bulk 1883-1912), undated,” *Texas Archival Resources Online*, accessed June 16, 2016, <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/tslac/40060/tsl-40060.html>.

<sup>10</sup> Terri Myers and A. Elizabeth Butman, *West Line Historic District, National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form* (Washington: National Park Service, 2005). The National Register nomination includes a detailed discussion of the evolution of one of Austin’s earliest subdivisions on the city’s west side. James H. Raymond, an Austin pioneer, banker, and former Treasurer for the Republic of Texas, acquired over 200 acres of land west of Shoal Creek. As Austin grew over time, he subdivided the land into smaller parcels and marketed it for residential development.

<sup>11</sup> Humphrey and Crawford, 80.

<sup>12</sup> Kenneth Hafertepe, *Abner Cook: Master Building on the Texas Frontier* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1991), 198–199.

<sup>13</sup> Willard B. Robinson, “Pride of Texas: The State Capitol,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 92, no. 2 (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1988): 230.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

- <sup>15</sup> William Elton Green, "'A Question of Great Delicacy': The Texas Capitol Competition, 1881," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 92, no. 2 (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1988).
- <sup>16</sup> William Elton Green, "Capitol," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 21, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ccc01>.
- <sup>17</sup> "Austin Beginnings: Government Services," Austin Treasures: Online Exhibits from the Austin History Center, accessed June 21, 2016, <http://www.austinlibrary.com/ahc/begin/govser.htm>.
- <sup>18</sup> Green, "'A Question of Great Delicacy': The Texas Capitol Competition, 1881," 261.
- <sup>19</sup> "Austin Female Academy," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 21, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/kba22>.
- <sup>20</sup> Austin Female Collegiate Institute, *The Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 21, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/kba17>.
- <sup>21</sup> Myers and Butman, *West Line Historic District, NRHP Form 8-54*.
- <sup>22</sup> "Texas Military Institute, Austin," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 21, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/kbt17>.
- <sup>23</sup> Michael Robert Heintze, "A History of the Black Private Colleges in Texas, 1865-1954" (Ph.D. dissertation, Texas Tech University, 1981), 49-53.
- <sup>24</sup> Roxanne Williamson, "Jasper N. Preston," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 16, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fpr25>.
- <sup>25</sup> Henry C. Dethloff, "Texas A&M University," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 21, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/kct08>.
- <sup>26</sup> Humphrey and Crawford, 93–97.
- <sup>27</sup> "University of Texas, Department of Physics History, Main Building Period: 1883-1934," accessed June 21, 2016, [https://web2.ph.utexas.edu/utphysicshistory/UTexas\\_Physics\\_History/Main\\_Building\\_Period\\_1883-1934.html](https://web2.ph.utexas.edu/utphysicshistory/UTexas_Physics_History/Main_Building_Period_1883-1934.html).
- <sup>28</sup> William Dunn, *Saint Edward's University: A Centennial History* (Austin: Nortex Press, 1986), 12, 16, 45.
- <sup>29</sup> "Brief Overview of the Early Years of Public Schools in Austin and Travis County," *Public Schools Resource: Sources of Information Relating to Austin and Travis County Schools*, accessed June 21, 2016, [http://www.austinlibrary.com/ahc/downloads/Public\\_Schools\\_Guide.pdf](http://www.austinlibrary.com/ahc/downloads/Public_Schools_Guide.pdf).
- <sup>30</sup> Morrison & Fourmy's General Directory of the City of Austin, 1885–86 (Galveston: Morrison & Fourmy, 1885), 47.

## 1.3. Transitioning into the Twentieth Century, 1893–1932

### 1.3.1. STREETCARS PROVIDE A NEW MODE OF TRANSPORTATION

In most urban areas in the United States during the last quarter of the 1800s, animal-powered streetcars provided an efficient means of intra-city transportation. These systems became especially common in areas of dense concentrations, especially in downtowns where stores, offices and other commercial enterprises attracted people and various activities. Streetcar lines extended from central locations to other important nodes and to new residential areas being developed in outlying areas. Many streetcar operators and owners were land developers who understood that streetcars could generate greater interest in and increase sales for their new suburbs. Austin followed this trend, and as the city grew during the late 1800s and early 1900s, the streetcar played an increasingly important role in land development patterns.

The city's first streetcar system was developed by the Austin City Railroad Company, which was established on September 7, 1874, when the city council approved its franchise. John Milton Swisher, a prominent local banker and entrepreneur (whose father was an early pioneer who settled near the present-day School for the Deaf) headed the effort. The system began regular service on January 15, 1875 (*figure II-38*). Although ownership of the franchise changed hands twice over the next 14 years, the system remained in operation and provided effective service to its customers. The line initially ran primarily along Congress Avenue but extended outward to other areas of the city over time.<sup>1</sup>

Figure II-38. Union (I–GN) Depot in Austin, ca. 1890. The main trunk of Austin's streetcar system extended along Congress Avenue, where most retail and businesses activities were concentrated. The passenger depot at West Cypress (3rd) Street was another node of activity. Travelers could step off a train and easily get to most of the city's most important landmarks by streetcar. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph496705/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, APL.



By 1887, map maker Augustus Koch revisited Austin and prepared a second bird's eye view map, this time looking northwest (*figure II-39*, to follow), which provided a glimpse of emerging residential development west of Shoal Creek. The map showed a streetcar network that served the city center, but it also depicted tracks that extended to outlying areas. To the west, it followed



Figure II-39. Augustus Koch, *Austin, State Capital of Texas*, 1887. Map maker Augustus Koch revisited Austin soon after the new capitol building was completed and he found a city that had experienced rapid growth and dramatic change. The focal point, as before with the 1873 map, was the capitol; but the new edifice loomed over the entirety of Austin at a size and scale unmatched in the city, although the main building at the University of Texas campus was itself an imposing landmark. Development within the original town site was dense, especially along Congress Avenue and East Pecan



(6th) Street. Other noteworthy buildings included other government buildings, churches, and residences for many of the city's elite. The Congress Avenue Bridge over the Colorado River linked Austin with new areas being developed to the south, although much of this growth was beyond the map's area of coverage. Several lumberyards encompass entire city blocks and provided the building materials for a residential construction boom. Besides the streetcar system, the city's transportation network boasted many improvements that included more streets, new and better bridges and expanded rail lines. Source: Texas Archives and Library Commission.

along West Pecan [6th] Street beyond Shoal Creek; to the north, it ran along Colorado Street and on to the University of Texas campus. To the east, it extended along East Live Oak (2nd), Red River, and Cypress (3rd) Streets to the H&TC railroad depot and beyond. Although the map shows a new metal truss bridge across the Colorado River, no streetcar service extended to south Austin at that time.

Koch shows animal-powered streetcars; however, within a few years after the map's publication, Monroe Shipe—a recent arrival from Abilene, Kansas—created a competing electricity-powered streetcar line that began service on February 26, 1891. The success of Shipe's operations quickly led to a merger that created the Austin Rapid Transit Railway Company. The new system relied on electricity generated from a coal-powered plant that operated near the area where the city later constructed the Seaholm Power Plant.<sup>2</sup> Shipe's business dealings extended beyond the streetcar as he—along with many land speculators and developers across the state and nation—recognized the ways in which transportation systems supported real estate development.

### 1.3.2. EARLY STREETCAR SUBURBS

A key aspect of Shipe's electrical streetcar line was the creation of Hyde Park, Austin's first streetcar suburb. Hyde Park's establishment marked a departure from the city's previous residential development because of the symbiotic relationship between transportation and real estate development. Other suburbs predated Hyde Park. James Raymond subdivided a portion of his extensive landholdings west of Shoal Creek and created the Raymond Plateau (1871) subdivision.<sup>3</sup> In 1877, John Swisher, who earlier had created the city's first streetcar line, filed a plat map for the Swisher Addition on the road to San Antonio in 1877.<sup>4</sup> Numerous additions were created in outlots on the city's east side especially on either side of the H&TC railroad tracks (*figure II-40*, on the next page).

Charles A. Newning and George P. Warner advanced the idea of a suburban development in Austin even further with their Fairview Park addition (1886). It occupied a hilly area that overlooked Austin near the Colorado River's south bank and immediately east of the Swisher Addition (*figure II-41*, to follow). Fairview Park's development was tied closely to a major improvement within the local transportation network: the construction of a new metal truss bridge over the Colorado River. Newning and Warner likely created the new subdivision hoping to capitalize on the construction of a structure that would provide a direct and reliable link to downtown Austin. Fairview Park's layout deviated from the standard grid that had characterized local land developments up until that time. Instead, it had streets that adapted to the terrain's contours. Another innovation of the subdivision centered upon the developer's expanded role. Although Raymond, Swisher, and other previous real estate speculators simply subdivided and sold the land, the buyer bore all costs for any new construction and typically paid for such improvements with cash. The developers of the Fairview Park suburb, however, touted a new marketing innovation that allowed buyers to finance new construction immediately and then pay it back incrementally with regular installments plus



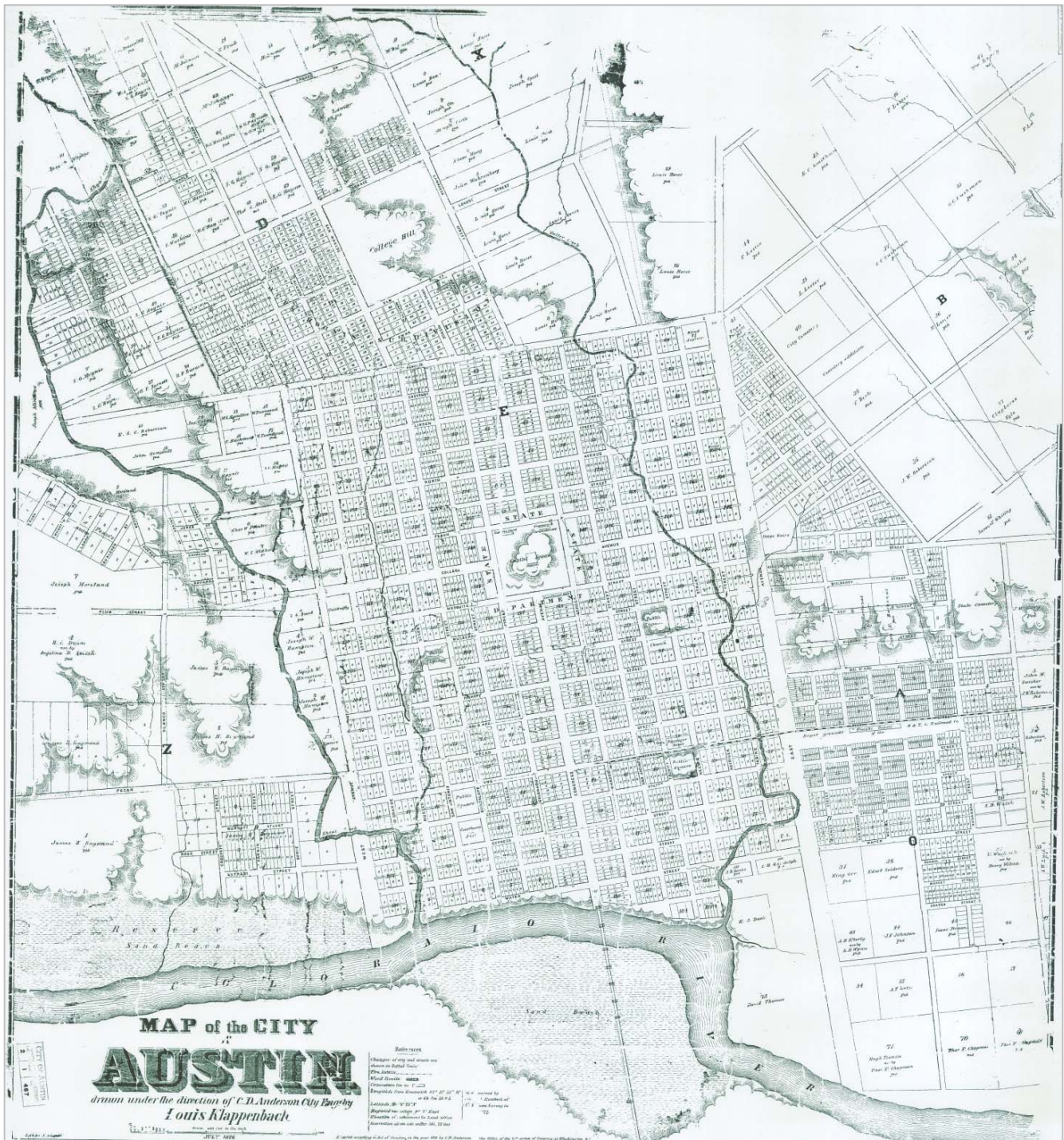
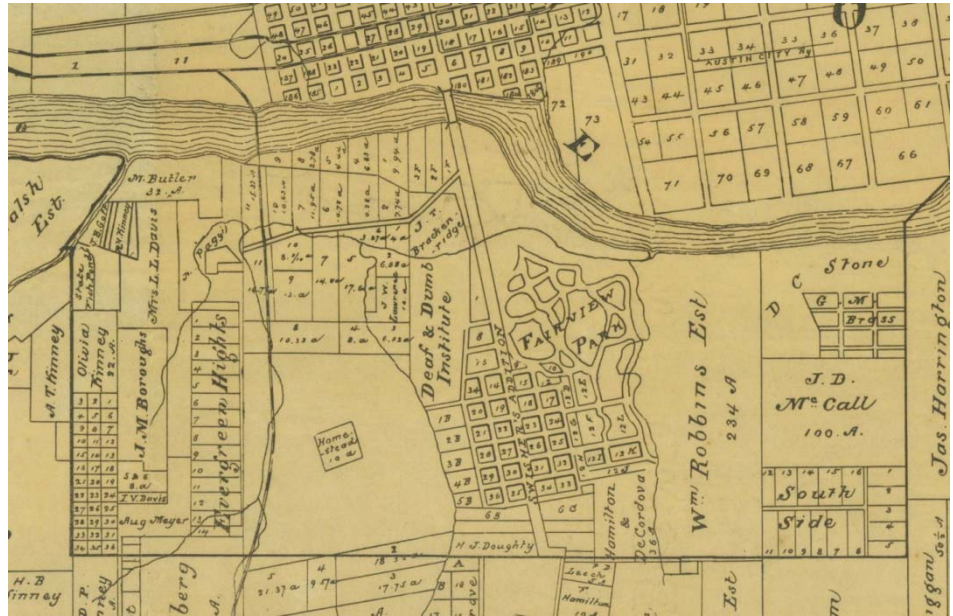


Figure II-40. Luis Klappenbach, *Map of the City of Austin*, 1876. This map shows emerging land-development patterns after the H&TC railroad reached Austin. Outlots in Divisions A and O experienced development due to their proximity to the railroad; however new areas to the west (James Raymond and Governor E. M. Pease subdivisions) and to the north (Louis Hort's Subdivision) reveal that the city expanded in other areas also. The map also indicates how the Outlots, which had been established in 1840, formed the basis for new residential areas. Developers and land owners partitioned large tracts of land into smaller land units for the construction of residences, stores, and other improvements. Although much of East Austin included new subdivisions, other additions were created near the University of Texas campus to the north and, to a lesser extent, hilly areas to the west. Source: General Land Office.



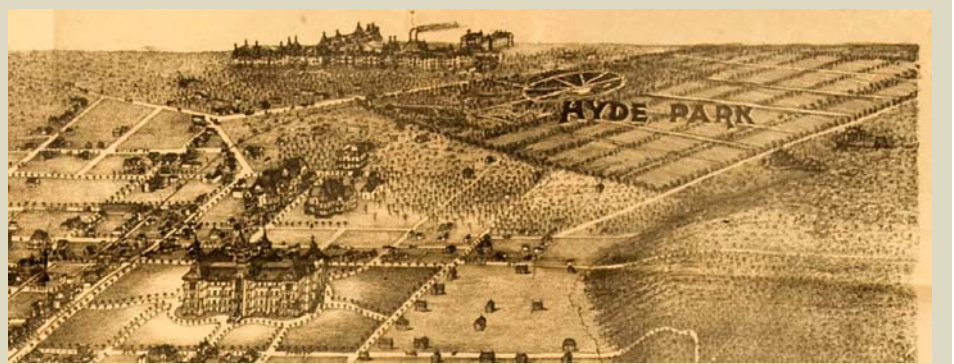
Figure II-41. Detail of *Austin and Surrounding Properties* by Bergen Daniel & Gracy, 1891. This detail of a landownership map of the city shows the Fairview Park subdivision in relation to South Congress Avenue and the Swisher Addition. Fairview Park's irregular layout represented a departure from earlier land-development endeavors in Austin and was far ahead of its time. Source: General Land Office.



interest. An advertisement promoting Fairview Park detailed this strategy stating that, “buildings will be erected for purchasers and carried on long time at low rate of interest.”<sup>5</sup> This marketing tactic encouraged sales by requiring less upfront costs, catering to a growing middle class. Such a system remains the foundation of the present-day housing market but it represented a dramatic departure from conventional financing practices at that time.

Building upon these trends yet introducing additional marketing techniques, Monroe Shipe announced his new Hyde Park suburb on January 3, 1891 in what was then far-north Austin near the State Lunatic Asylum (Austin State Hospital). As the owner and operator of the streetcar system, he extended service to the new suburb and actively promoted its development.<sup>6</sup> Since the land was more remote, he was able to offer inexpensive house lots that nonetheless remained easily accessible to downtown via the streetcar line. Shipe apparently helped to arrange or co-sponsor an update to the 1887 bird's eye map to showcase the new Hyde Park suburb. The updated map, produced in 1891, includes a new banner in the bottom left-hand corner that prompts viewers to contact the Board of Trade and Shipe's own company, “The Austin Rapid Transit R'y Co.”, for more information about “The Coming Great Manufacturing Center of the South!” (See *figure II-42* below.)

Figure II-42. Augustus Koch, *Partial View of Austin, Texas*, 1891. The updated bird's eye map of Austin depicts the new Hyde Park Addition at what was then the outskirts of the city. It was north of the University of Texas campus (bottom) and east of the State Lunatic Asylum (left). Hyde Park is depicted as a newly platted area with tree-lined streets. A park with an oval-shaped racetrack was designed to appeal to newcomers arriving in Austin looking to enjoy many of the new streetcar suburb's amenities. Source: Texas State Library and Archives.



For his new real estate venture, Shipe introduced a number of amenities to attract customers and residences, such as a park, lake, and grandstand. Even his own opulent residence at 3816 Avenue F (listed in the National Register within the Shadowlawn Historic District) became something of a marketing tool that could be used for increased sales. Among the earliest and most prominent individuals to settle in Hyde Park was Elisabet Ney, a well-known European sculptor. In 1892, she purchased a large secluded tract near the suburb's northeast corner and built a castle-like studio and residence of her own design, which she called "Formosa" (*figure II-43* below).<sup>7</sup> She is known for her sculptures of famous Texans, such as Stephen F. Austin and Sam Houston (on display in the Texas State Capitol), as well as notable European figures, including King Ludwig II of Bavaria, German Chancellor Otto Von Bismarck, philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer, and fairytale author Jacob Grimm.<sup>8</sup>

Figure II-43. Elisabet Ney Studio, ca. 1895, at 304 East 44th Street. Born in 1833 in Munster, Germany, Elisabet Ney studied with Christian Daniel Rauch, a renowned sculptor in mid-nineteenth century Europe. She married Dr. Edmund Montgomery, a Scottish physician and scientist and moved to Georgia in 1871. A year later, she and her family moved to Texas and purchased the Liendo Plantation in Waller County. In 1892, she moved to Austin to resume her professional career as a sculptor and maintained her studio in this building. The studio was built in two phases. The original building, as shown in this image, was a one-story edifice. In 1903, Ney added a two-story tower with crenellation on the front (south) façade. Soon after her death in 1907, Ella and Joseph B. Dibrell purchased the property, in 1909 and preserved it as an art center in her memory. It is a city-owned property listed in the National Register. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashist.ory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth125271/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



The streetcar system extended to other parts of the city, as noted in *figure II-44* on the following page, and spurred the development of other residential areas. The West Line Historic District is a particularly good example of the trend.



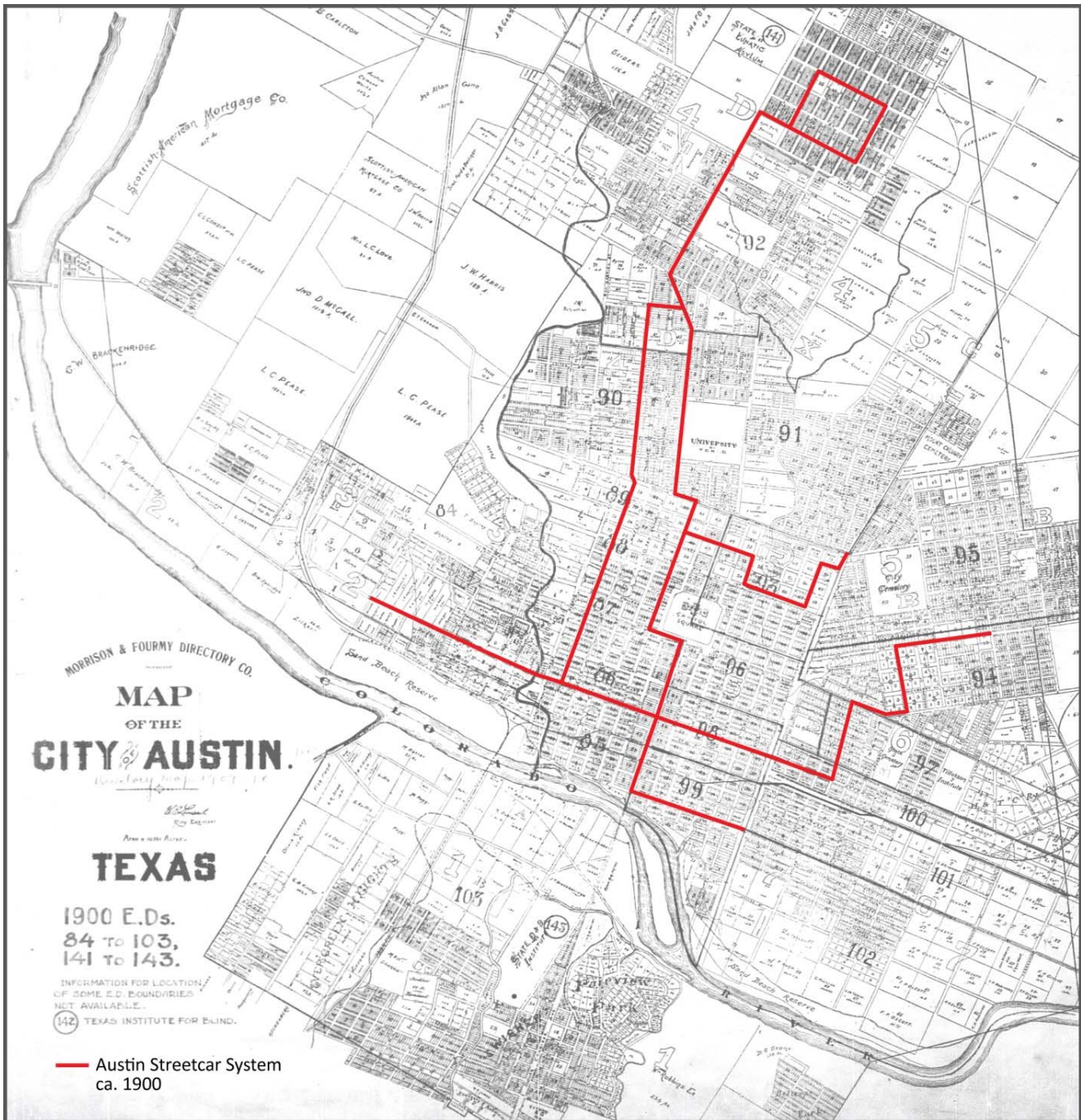


Figure II-44. Morrison & Fourmy Directory Co., *Map of the City of Austin, Texas*, 1900. This map was created by the publisher of the Austin city directory and was also used by the U.S. Census Bureau for the decennial census. The map notes in red the streetcar line that provided service to densely populated areas in the city center as well as to new suburban developments on the outskirts of town, most notably Monroe Shipe's Hyde Park subdivision. Source: Perry Castañeda Map Collection at the University of Texas at Austin, overlay by HHM.

### 1.3.3. AUSTIN'S 1893 MASONRY DAM

Shipe's goal for developing Hyde Park depended heavily on Austin's continued growth, as he and other developers sought to capitalize on the resulting need for affordable housing to accommodate the influx of new residents. To help promote even more growth, they—along with other business and civic

leaders—advocated the construction of a dam and power plant. By augmenting or replacing the existing coal-powered plant, these proponents argued, Austin could provide an abundance of low-cost electricity that would attract myriad industrial and manufacturing concerns and further diversify the local economy (*figure II-45*). Shipe was particularly well poised to reap the benefits of a better and more reliable power source because of his electrical streetcar system.

Figure II-45.  
Advertisement in *Texas Industrial Review*, October 1895. This advertisement reflects how business leaders encouraged investment in local manufacturing operations. High cotton yields along the Blackland Prairie Belt of Texas, which included eastern Travis County, led to the establishment of cotton textile mills in cities such as Waco, Hillsboro, Itasca, Dallas, and McKinney around the turn of the 1900s. Supporters of these mills appealed to local investors as a way to enjoy greater profits by allowing cotton to be processed in local mills rather than ship raw goods to factories in other states or nations. This advertisement shows how civic boosters promoted Austin for such an industrial operation. At least one investor shared in the idea of Austin developing into a manufacturing center. San Antonio banker George Brackenridge acquired a large tract of land because of its potential for industrial development. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth39133/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library,

56 THE TEXAS INDUSTRIAL REVIEW.

# AWAKE! AROUSE! BESTIR YOURSELVES

## Citizens of Travis County

NOW IS THE CRUCIAL MOMENT AT HAND!

“Now  
is the  
Accepted  
Time!”



“Now  
is the  
Day of  
Salva-  
tion!”

# A COTTON MILL IS TO BE BUILT

AT

## AUSTIN'S GREAT DAM

BY THE

### POPULAR WILL AND BY POPULAR SUBSCRIPTION

**\$150,000 to be Raised by Patriotic Citizens.**  
**1500 Shares of Stock at \$100 each.**  
**Payable in Weekly Installments of \$1 per share.**

# NOW DO SOMETHING FOR YOUR COUNTY

Invest your savings in a paying investment.  
 If you have no savings, begin now to save.  
 Lay aside \$5 or \$10 each month for stock.

**FARMERS, GINNERS, COUNTRY MERCHANTS!** Join with Austin's workers. Send some of your representative men to Austin to investigate. Appoint your own canvassing committees and join hand in hand with your city in this enterprise. You will get more for your cotton. You will have a larger market for every product.

C. H. LEBOLD, President Austin Board of Trade.

The idea of tapping the Colorado River as a source of power was as old as Austin itself. In 1839, the capital site selection commission noted such a



possibility in its recommendations to establish the seat of government on the river. By the 1870s, several studies had explored the idea of building a dam, but real or substantive progress remained elusive. In the late 1880s, support for such a massive project gained momentum, and John McDonald successfully ran for mayor in 1889 on a platform that promoted a dam's construction (*figure II-46*). Under his leadership, the city council approved a

Figure II-46. Fire Wagon with Banner, 1892. This image illustrates how dam proponents resorted to creative means to generate support for the project. The banner, which reads, "Colorado No. 2 A Unit for the Dam 44 Members Strong" was displayed by Austin firefighters. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph704022/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



bond election in May 1890 to finance its construction, and voters overwhelmingly approved the project. Excavation of the dam's foundation began on November 5th that year, and the first stone was laid on May 5, 1891. The project garnered national attention, as noted by numerous articles published in *The Engineering News and American Railway Journal* (*figure II-47* below).<sup>9</sup> The masonry dam required an extensive amount of materials (limestone and granite), which required the construction of a railroad spur from the I-GN line that later became Lake Austin Boulevard. The dam was completed almost exactly two years later, on May 2, 1893.<sup>10</sup> The city also erected a new power plant with water-driven turbines.



Figure II-47. Austin Dam Nearing Completion, 1893. The image appeared in the January 26, 1893 edition of *the Engineering News and American Railway Journal*, a weekly magazine published in New York City. It later merged with another publication to create the *Engineering News-Record*, which remains an important trade journal for the construction industry. The magazine published several articles that described the dam's construction and the kinds of obstacles and challenges encountered by its builders. This image depicts conditions of the dam a few months before its completion in May 1893. Source: "The Austin Dam," *Engineering News and American Railway Journal* XXIX, no. 4 (1893), 87 (also available through Google Books).

### 1.3.4. CITY BOOSTERISM AS AUSTIN TRANSITIONS TO THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

With its expanded capacity to generate electricity, Austin boasted a low-cost source of power that the Board of Trade and other city boosters readily exploited to promote Austin's continued growth and further diversify its economy. Besides the 1891 update of Koch's bird's eye map, other publications of the late 1800s and early 1900s lauded the city's many attributes, amenities, and potential for growth. Such literature was a common marketing device that business leaders in urban areas throughout the state and nation employed at the time as they sought to promote growth and prosperity in their respective community.

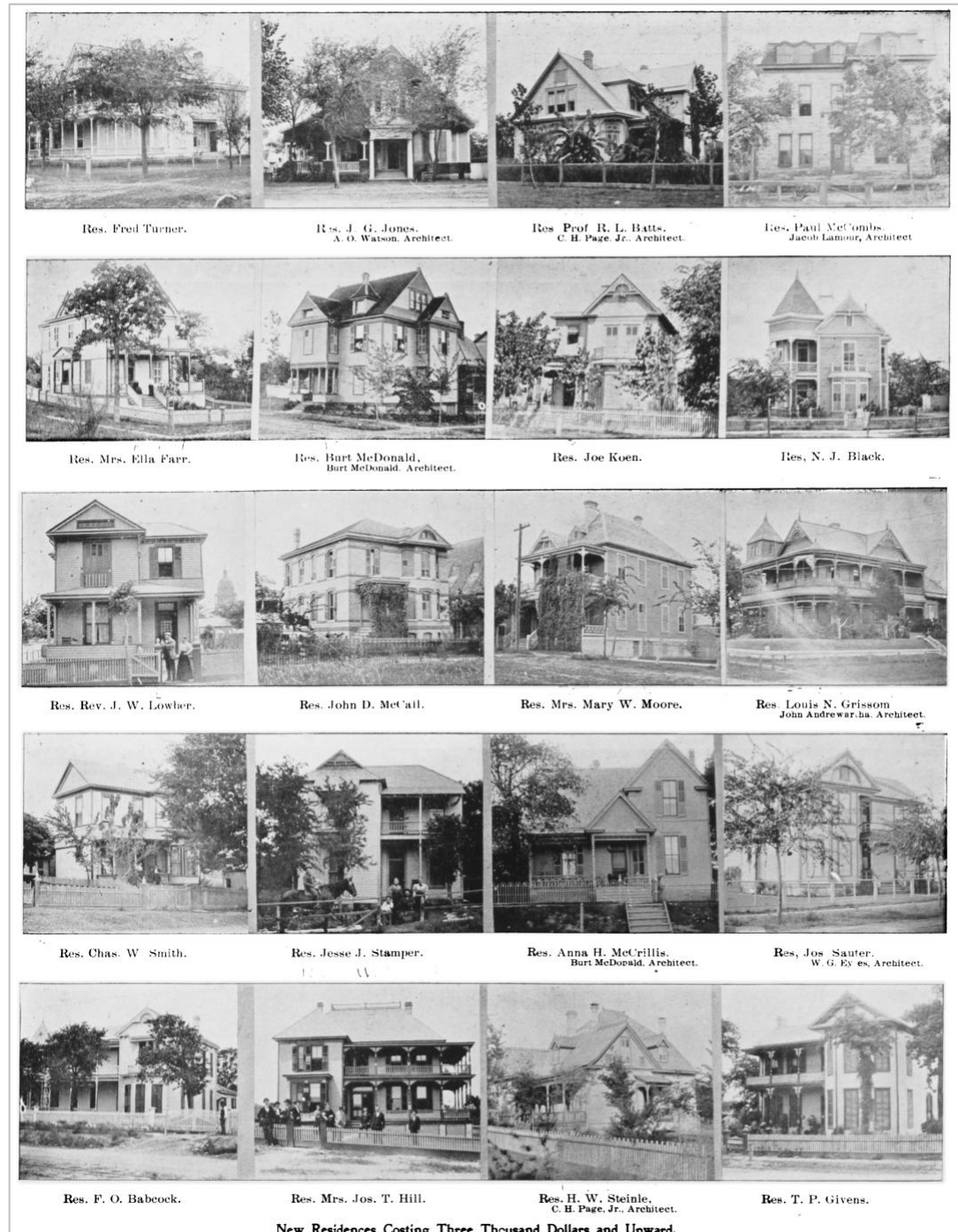
The graphically rich 1900 publication, *Austin, Texas Illustrated: The Famous Capital City of the Lone Star State*, exemplified this trend. It presented impressive views of Austin and its downtown, as well as landmark businesses, warehouses, government buildings, colleges, schools, and institutions that reflected the vibrant and robust local economy. In addition, it highlighted the surrounding landscape and natural areas that Mirabeau B. Lamar found so appealing. The publication also showcased the opulent mansions of the city's elite and powerful (figure II-48). These majestic structures were the home of

Figure II-48. "A Group of Fine Residences." Most of these houses are still standing and are listed in the National Register. Some are located in the Bremond Block Historic District and others are in the Judge's Hill and West Austin neighborhoods. However, some of these houses are in the new suburban developments of Fairview Park (Warner House) and Hyde Park (Shipe House), which illustrated the growing significance of these new residential neighborhoods that developed in more remote areas during the late 1800s. Source: *Austin, Texas Illustrated: The Famous Capital City of the Lone Star State*.



some of Austin's oldest and most prominent families and included successful merchants, bankers, real estate developers, and statesmen. The publication also contains a set of residences not quite as grand or elaborately detailed. They were designed by local architects such as C. H. Page, Jr., A. O. Watson, John Andrewartha, and Burt McDonald for some of Austin's up-and-coming entrepreneurs and professionals (*figure II-49*).

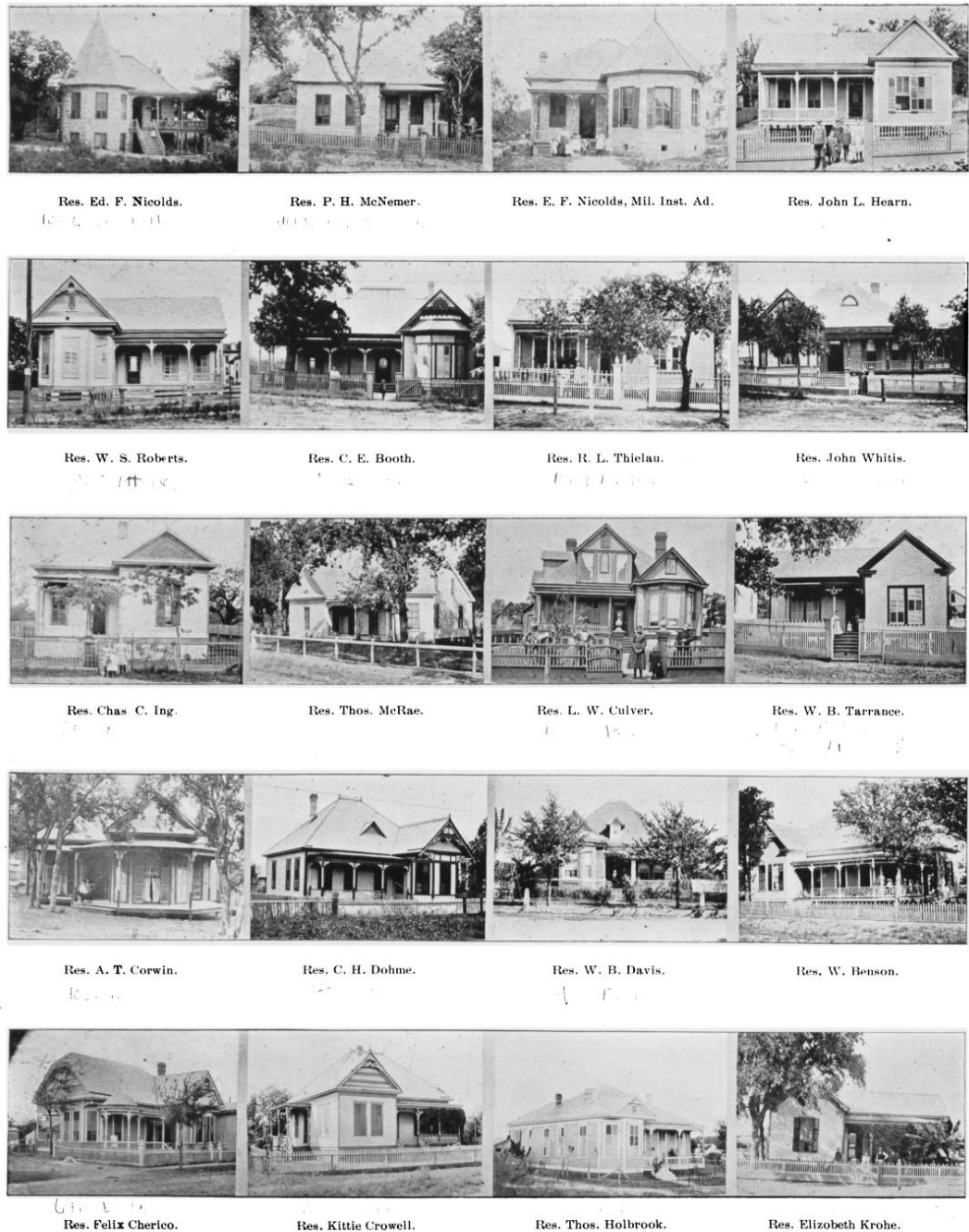
Figure II-49. "New Residences Costing Three Thousand Dollars and Upward." With one exception (McCombs House) these are two-story Queen Anne style residences regarded as the most modern and fashionable at the time. The publication notes the designers of several buildings, which would have been a valuable marketing tool for these local architects. Based on a city directory from the time of the publication, these houses were located in various parts of central Austin, although a notable exception was the Joseph Sauter House on Avenue F in Hyde Park. Source: *Austin, Texas Illustrated: The Famous Capital City of the Lone Star State*.



In contrast to contemporaneous pamphlets, this booklet also presented images of more modest-sized and -priced houses that would have appealed to

a growing middle class (*figure II-50*). The publication states: “It is with pleasure we present in this volume numerous pictures of these homes and a close inspection will reveal that we have been impartial in our selections and have endeavored to show the city as it is.”<sup>11</sup> Most of these houses, regardless of size or cost, displayed characteristics of the Queen Anne style, a popular architectural form of the period, especially for residential design.

Figure II-49. “New Residences Costing Three Thousand Dollars and Upward.” With one exception (McCombs House) these are two-story Queen Anne style residences regarded as the most modern and fashionable at the time. The publication notes the designers of several buildings, which would have been a valuable marketing tool for these local architects. Based on a city directory from the time of the publication, these houses were located in various parts of central Austin, although a notable exception was the Joseph Sauter House on Avenue F in Hyde Park. Source: *Austin, Texas Illustrated: The Famous Capital City of the Lone Star State*.



New Residences Costing Three Thousand Dollars and Under.

Many of the examples presented in the booklet were likely erected from pattern books available at Nalle & Co., Calcasieu & Co., or other local



lumberyards and dealers. Such a trend extended to other more modest residences, as exemplified by the Thorp House in Hyde Park (*figure II-51*). In fact, residences similar in scale and type to the Thorp House represented a far higher percentage of the new housing stock of the period rather than those depicted in the *Austin Illustrated* promotional booklet. These modest dwellings were built in all parts of the city, using materials sold at lumber dealers and constructed by independent carpenters. Since the eclectic Queen Anne style remained popular during the late 1800s and very early 1900s, many homeowners simply applied prefabricated architectural detailing as decoration, a relatively easy task if the owner could afford such a luxury. Many of the traditional house forms, such as two-room and center-passage dwellings with their linear, one-room-deep configuration, remained popular. However, a new trend emerged during the late 1800s and became closely associated with what many think of as a “Victorian” house. This distinctive form presented a more L-shaped building footprint with a projecting front wing and a cross-gabled roof. This arrangement allowed for a porch to extend across the set-back portion of the front, which displayed varying degrees of turned- or jigsawn-wood ornamentation.

Figure II-51. Thorp House at 4401 Speedway. This one-story frame dwelling typifies the kind of house built throughout Austin at the turn of the 1900s. This distinctive domestic form with its projecting front wing reflected the growing popularity of a standardized house type built throughout much of the country at that time. It also reflected a departure from the more traditional and folk forms that prevailed during the pre-railroad era. This house was the residence of Raymond D. “Boss” Thorp (left), who later served as Austin’s chief of police for 27 years. Source: Austin History Center.



### 1.3.5. CONTINUED DEVELOPMENT OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

As Austin continued to grow so too did the city’s many institutions of higher learning. As the flagship of the state’s public college system, the University of Texas increased its enrollment to over 3,000 by the 1890s, and added new facilities even before the final (east) wing of the Main Building was completed in 1899. The Board of Regents—the governing body overseeing the university’s operation—hired different architects to design these new facilities, so the overall effect created an eclectic character with differing styles, materials, and scale. The Regents sought to give the campus a more

unified character and quality and hired a San Antonio architectural firm (Coughlin and Ayres) to develop a master plan. The Regents felt that Coughlin and Ayres' plan lacked a grand enough vision and subsequently hired St. Louis architect Frederick M. Mann to prepare a new plan. As Mann was completing his design, another faction within the Board of Regents contacted New York-based architect Cass Gilbert to prepare an alternate plan. Gilbert presented a conceptual sketch in early 1909, just about the time Mann completed his plan. The Regents embraced Gilbert's scheme and commissioned him to develop the master plan and to design a new library (Battle Hall) in a modified Spanish Renaissance style, which was completed in 1911 (*figure II-52*).<sup>12</sup> As the university expanded, its surrounding neighborhoods continued to develop. Hyde Park and other additions soon housed many of the professors who taught at the university.

Figure II-52. State University Library Building. Cass Gilbert, who designed this building, was a prominent and successful architect based in New York who enjoyed a national reputation for his Beaux Arts designs of the early 1900s. His 1910 master plan for the University of Texas greatly influenced the physical and architectural character of the campus as the school expanded in later years. This building, now known as Battle Hall, is listed in the National Register and has been honored as one of *America's Top 150 Favorite Works of Architecture* by the American Institute of Architects, according to the University School of Architecture (<http://soa.utexas.edu/battle>). Gilbert also designed the nearby Education Building (Sutton Hall) in 1918 in a similar style. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht125333/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



The University of Texas was not the only college to expand during the early 1900s. Samuel Huston College, a co-educational college for African Americans, completed its first facility in 1900 on its six-acre campus at the southeast corner of East 12th Street and East Avenue (*figure II-53*, on the next page). With out-of-state financial support, the school enjoyed considerable success, and by 1916 included additional buildings on a campus that had expanded to 15 acres.<sup>13</sup> Besides its two-story main building, Tillotson College boasted Beard Hall (*figure II-54*, to follow) and a two-story, wood-frame industrial school on its large campus, which stretched from East 7th Street to East 11th Street. The main building at Saint Edward's College sustained extensive damage in a 1903 fire, but was rebuilt and re-opened that same year. Austin soon claimed



Figure II-53. (Left) Main Building, Samuel Huston College, ca. 1911. The founding of Samuel Huston College dates to 1876 when the Methodist Episcopal conference decided to establish a school for African Americans in Austin. Samuel Huston of Marengo, Iowa subsequently donated \$9,000 to support the school, which was named in his honor. It continued to grow and expand at this location, but the construction of the interregional highway in the early 1950s required right-of-way acquisition from the campus. The school merged with Austin's other African American college on October 24, 1952 to create Huston-Tillotson College (now Huston-Tillotson University). Source: *Souvenir of Austin, Texas*, 1911. University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph61095/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

Figure II-54. (Right) Beard Hall – Tillotson College by Neal Douglass, 1950. Built in 1894, Beard Hall was the second masonry building to be constructed on the campus. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph74419/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



yet another college when the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary began operations in a downtown location in 1902. The school soon acquired land on East 27th Street, north of the University of Texas, and moved to a new dormitory-classroom-administration building later known as Sampson Hall (razed; see *figure II-55*, to follow).<sup>14</sup> Yet another church-affiliated institution opened in Austin during the early 1900s. A group of Methodists within the local Swedish community began efforts to establish Texas Wesleyan College in 1907. Supporters soon acquired a 21-acre tract of land northwest of the



Figure II-55. "Sampson Hall in the Snow," 1949. This three-story building was the home of the Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary. It stood at 104 West 27th Street, near the Scottish Rite Dormitory, but was demolished in 1963. Source: Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, Austin Seminary Archives.



University of Texas, in an area called Wheelers Grove (near the present-day site of the University of Texas Law School), and it opened on January 9, 1912 and steadily increased its enrollment over time.<sup>15</sup> The school later sold the property to the University of Texas and merged with another Methodist school in Fort Worth, which is now known as Texas Wesleyan University. These many institutions ensured that Austin retained its reputation as a state educational center, despite efforts by many civic and business leaders to diversify the local economy.

### 1.3.6. A MATURING CITY

During the early 1900s, Austin was positioned to continue its growth and expansion. (Refer to population counts in *Table I-4* in *Volume I, Section 2.4.1.1.*) While it lacked the commercial, industrial, transportation, and shipping might of larger and more rapidly growing cities such as Houston and Dallas, Austin claimed a robust economy that attracted new residents. State government and the many universities and colleges in Austin remained the underpinning of the city's economy, but commerce and trade continued to be important contributors. The masonry dam's devastating collapse on April 7, 1900, which killed many people and caused extensive damage, dealt a severe blow to the city and dashed its hopes of becoming an industrial and manufacturing hub in Central Texas. Efforts to garner public support and financing for a new dam took place over a 15-year period as engineers also studied how to make design changes to correct structural flaws to avoid another disaster. Ultimately, they decided that a reinforced-concrete structure would be more suitable; however, it was only partially rebuilt and finally abandoned following another flood in 1915.<sup>16</sup> Despite the delay in rebuilding its dam, Austin remained an important regional center of commerce and trade

due to the railroads that continued to facilitate the transportation of goods and people to and from Austin.

### 1.3.6.1. Parks and Recreational Sites

The influx of new residents during the early 1900s triggered a series of civic and other public works projects in addition to the dam's reconstruction. With the growing City Beautiful movement sweeping the country, Austin's citizens recognized the need for more recreational spaces, which led to the establishment of the city's first landscaped municipal public park. Mayor A. P. Wooldridge headed its creation. It was officially dedicated on 1909 in one of the four public squares Edwin Waller had set aside with his original town plan. At that time, Austin already claimed Pease Park, which Governor Pease had donated to the city in 1875; however, it remained largely unimproved until later in the 1900s. Wooldridge Park, on the other hand, was a formally designed landscape replete with a Classical Revival style bandstand designed by Charles H. Page. Its well-maintained grounds provided an ideal place for citizens to relax and congregate (*figure II-56* below). Promotional literature and brochures of the early 1900s also touted other landscape and recreational sites in Austin including Barton Springs, Deep Eddy, Bull Creek, and Mount Bonnell. Even Capitol Square received attention, as noted by a 1915 brochure, which stated that "the grounds surrounding the capitol embrace about 20 acres and have several miles of gravel and cement walks cross the grounds in all directions ...There are a number of artificial lakes, pools and fountains where aquatic plants are grown in tropical luxuriance and where innumerable gold fish disport themselves."<sup>17</sup>

Figure II-56. Wooldridge Park. Named for Mayor A. P. Wooldridge, this park has been an important gathering place in downtown Austin since its dedication in 1909. Numerous civic functions, celebrations, and concerts have been held on the grounds. It also was used by many politicians who launched their campaigns at the park including Governors O. B. Colquitt, James E. "Pa" Ferguson, Pat Neff, Dan Moody, James Allred, W. Lee "Pappy" O'Daniel, and Allan Shivers. Source: *Souvenir of Austin, Texas: Capital of the Great Lone Star State*, 1911. University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texas.history.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth39135/m1/4/>; crediting Austin History Center, APL.



Other municipal and public works projects included the construction of the Congress Avenue Bridge in 1909–1910 (*figure II-57*, to follow), a new city hall built in 1910 at Colorado and West 8th Streets, as well as various schools at all grade levels including Austin High, Mathews, and Metz schools.

Figure II-57. Congress Avenue Bridge, Ellison Photo Co., 1910. The concrete arch bridge replaced the metal truss bridge built in 1884 (parts of the old metal truss bridge were salvaged and used to construct a bridge at Moore's Crossing in southeast Travis County). The new Congress Avenue Bridge was a noteworthy engineering achievement at the time and marked a departure from the type of bridges typically constructed at the time (most of which were metal truss bridges). This structure greatly improved the local transportation network as its broad width could easily accommodate a significant amount of traffic. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht125193/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, APL.



### 1.3.7. AUSTIN AND THE EARLY AUTOMOBILE ERA

The early 1900s also introduced another innovation to the city: the automobile. Its rapid acceptance and popularity had a profound effect on the city's architecture, land-use patterns, and physical character. The first automobile arrived in Austin about 1902 and their numbers soon swelled.<sup>18</sup> City directories note that the Austin Automobile Club was organized in October 1909, and by 1912, the group claimed 55 members.<sup>19</sup> It was one of a series of private clubs organized in urban areas throughout Texas to promote automobiles, construct better roads, and take driving tours. Early automobiles were expensive to purchase and maintain, but their affordability changed dramatically after Henry Ford introduced the Model T, the world's first mass-produced car, in 1918. As automobiles increased in number, so too did the need for better roads.<sup>20</sup> In the early 1910s, several visionary automobile enthusiasts even advocated the construction of multi-state and even transcontinental highways or auto trails at a time when the mere task of driving from one side of the city to another often proved to be a challenge.

Among the earliest of the great US auto trails of the 1910s was the Meridian Road (later Meridian Highway), which extended through Austin. Under the leadership of John C. Nicholson of Newton, Kansas, the Meridian Road Association organized in 1911 and proposed a highway to extend from Winnipeg, Canada, to Texas.<sup>21</sup> This north-south route extended through the nation's midsection and generally followed the Sixth Principal Meridian, hence the highway's name. The Meridian Road, like the Lincoln Highway (New York to San Francisco) and other auto trails of the era, predated any federal or state highway system.<sup>22</sup> Associations that promoted these roadways worked with elected officials and civic leaders in cities along the route to build and improve roads and promote new businesses that catered to the growing number of



motorists using the routes. The Meridian Road originally entered Texas at Burkburnett and extended to Fort Worth and Waco. The main line continued south through Austin, San Antonio, and Laredo. In Austin, the route entered from the north along present-day Lamar Boulevard but shifted to Guadalupe, Speedway, and Congress Avenue. It continued across the Congress Avenue Bridge toward Buda and ultimately to Laredo.<sup>23</sup>

The Meridian Highway was not the only early auto trail to pass through Austin. The King of Trails Highway also extended along the same route. It, too, began in Winnipeg but paralleled the Meridian Highway along a more easterly route until the two routes converged in Waco. From that point, the two highways generally, but not always, followed the same alignment.<sup>24</sup>

Like many people in other parts of the country, Austinites embraced the automobile, and its usage increased dramatically during the 1910s. Filling stations, repair facilities, dealerships, and even hotels, such as the Stephen F. Austin, were among the kinds of businesses that began to line the highway routes. Another innovation of the period was the tourist camp, which provided motorists a place to pitch a tent and presaged the modern-day motel. Austin had at least two tourist camps: one along the Meridian Highway, near the northeast corner of present-day Riverside Drive and South Congress Avenue, and another one near Barton Springs on the road to Bee Caves.<sup>25</sup>

### **1.3.7.1. Automobiles Begin to Change Austin's Character**

Automobiles' proliferation affected Austin and its physical character in other ways. Many home owners constructed small detached garages on their property to protect and store their vehicles when not in use. Narrow parcels and dense development, especially in the city's older parts, led to the construction of most garages at the rear of residential lots, accessible by way of alleys. However, many real estate developers began to widen their lots to allow for front driveways, thus accommodating the growing number of people who owned cars and purchased property in outlying areas.

Downtown wholesalers and distributors benefitted from the cost-effectiveness of trucks with increased transport capacity. This innovation spurred further development of the downtown area's warehouse district. The added weight of trucks and cars led to stress on the road and bridge networks. The city embarked on a more aggressive campaign to pave streets that had the highest volumes of traffic, since dirt streets created dust during dry conditions and mud when it rained.<sup>26</sup> The construction of better bridges across creeks and other drainage directed traffic flow along selected routes and contributed to the street network's improvement. Besides the Congress Avenue Bridge, the city constructed new bridges over Waller and Shoal creeks throughout the early 1900s (*figure II-58*, to follow).

The popularity of automobiles also affected the local streetcar system, which had operated on fixed rails since its founding in 1875. Although Henry Shipe introduced electric-powered trolleys in 1891, the system essentially continued to operate along the same routes. The system expanded over time and built extensions to meet increased demands and Austin's physical expansion.



Figure II-58. Waller Creek Bridge at 12th Street, 1932. This bridge over Waller Creek at 12th Street is one of the masonry structures that the city built to improve transportation within the local street network. The construction of this and other bridges accommodated the growing number of cars and trucks in Austin. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph125172/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

However, the investment of a fixed rail system required substantial capital outlay, and by 1926, the Austin City Council authorized the street railway company to operate “motor buses” as part of its system.<sup>27</sup> The use of such vehicles proved to be less disruptive, and by 1927, some residents asked that street car tracks in their neighborhood be removed so that buses could operate instead.<sup>28</sup> By 1933, the Austin Street Railway Company had a mixed system that included both electric-powered trolleys and buses that provided service to much of the city (see *figure II-59*, to follow).

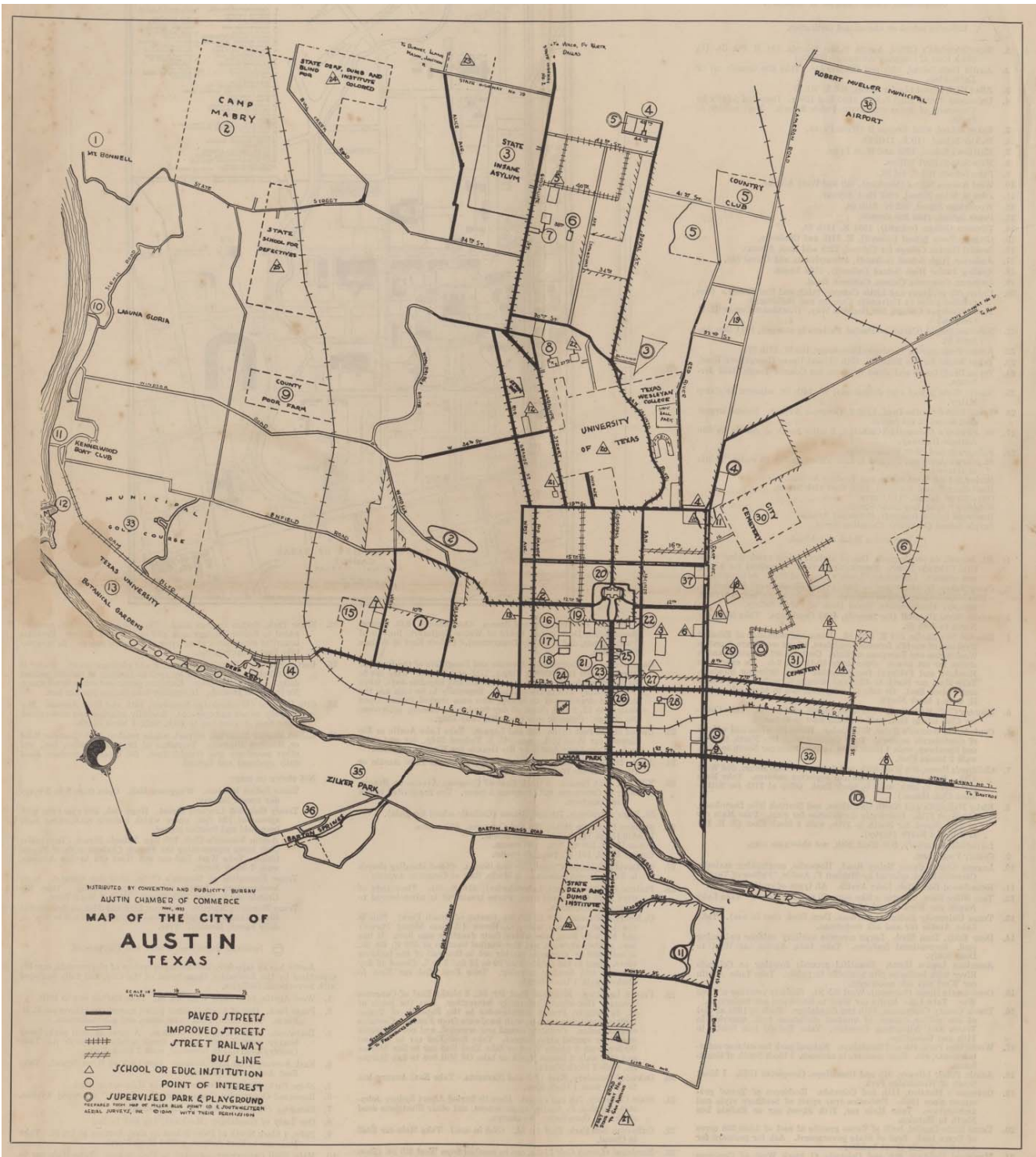


Figure II-59. Austin Chamber of Commerce, *Map of the City of Austin, Texas*, 1933. This map shows Austin's evolving transportation system in the early 1930s. Besides showing paved streets that accommodated the growing number of automobiles driven in Austin, the map also depicts a public transportation system that included both streetcar trolleys and motor buses. These routes extended along roadways that passed through areas with the greatest density of development. Many merchants established businesses along the routes to take advantage of the number of people and potential customers passing by their establishments. The streetcar system continued until 1940 when services were discontinued and the tracks were removed. Source: Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

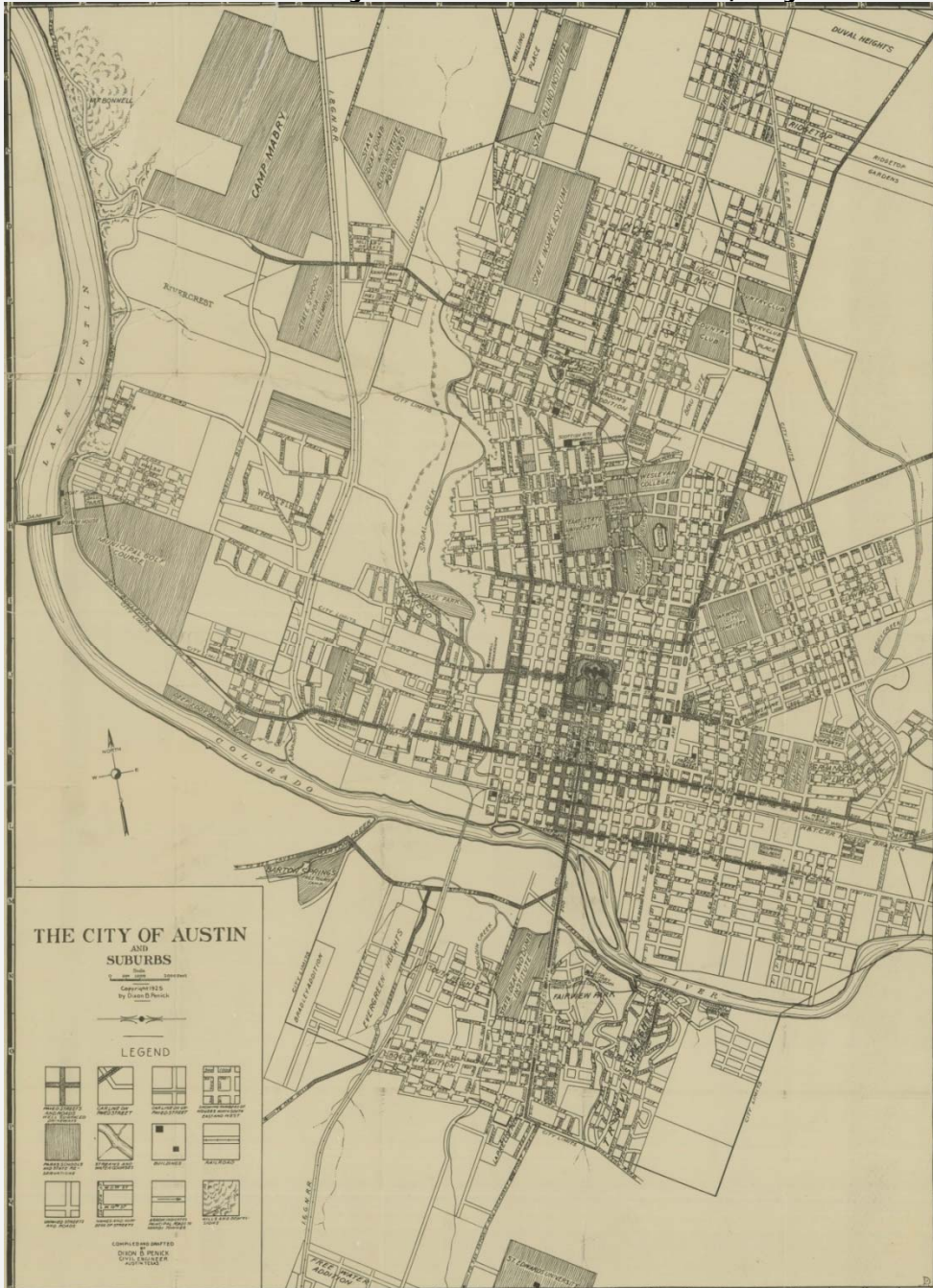


### 1.3.7.2. Transition from Streetcar Suburbs to Automobile-Oriented Suburbs

As Austin continued growing during the first quarter of the 1900s, developers continued to create new residential neighborhoods. Many of these new suburbs were located on streetcar lines. Areas along the West Line of the Austin Rapid Transit Railway Co. for example, experienced intense development during the 1910s and 1920s. In South Austin, the Bouldin family began to subdivide their land for new development, and the area's accessibility to the rest of the city was improved by the construction of the new concrete Congress Avenue Bridge (now the Ann W. Richards Congress Avenue Bridge, listed in the National Register) across the Colorado River.<sup>29</sup> The La Prella Place subdivision, another new South Austin neighborhood, published a brochure that emphasized its convenient location to both the streetcar system and the use of automobile (*figure II-60*). The booklet noted that a "car line, which no doubt soon will be extended, runs to within three blocks of the entrance. It takes only fifteen minutes by car to get to the heart of the city."<sup>30</sup> Other upscale Austin neighborhoods that developed during the era included Travis Heights, Enfield, and Westfield, many of which included deed and covenant restrictions that limited sales to "whites only."

Figure II-60. Congress Avenue from La Prella Place, 1911, *La Prella Place: Austin, Texas*. With a grand view of the state capitol in the background, this image shows the concrete piers that mark the entrance to this small subdivision on the city's south side. The addition was marketed as "Austin's Restricted Residence District" and the brochure stated that "[the] lots will be sold white persons only." Other restrictions stipulated that residences must be set back at least 25 feet from streets, front in the same direction on all streets, and meet thresholds for minimal construction costs. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht61106/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



**"The City of Austin and Suburbs," by Dixon B. Penick**

The dynamic quality of Austin's residential expansion and infrastructural improvement is captured in a map prepared in 1925 by Dixon B. Penick entitled "The City of Austin and Suburbs" (*figure 11-61 top left*). The map depicts the evolving street network and efforts to pave roads. It also identifies most of the city's largest new subdivisions and additions as well as the many tracts of public-owned lands for state government, municipal parks and recreational areas, including the Austin Country Club, Deep Eddy Bathing Beach, and Barton Springs. It shows the large area associated with Camp Mabry (a training camp established in 1892 for the Texas Volunteer Guard, later the Texas National Guard) in the city's northwest limits, just beyond the tracks of the I-GN railroad (*figure 11-62, bottom*). The map also shows the creation and/or relocation of several state-run schools and campuses. The State Blind Institute (formerly the School for the Blind and presently the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired) is shown at its new location at West 45th Street and Upper Georgetown [Burnet] Road, which provided far more room for expansion than the old campus. The map also depicts the "State School for Feeble-minded" (Austin State Supported Living Center) and the "State Deaf Dumb and Blind Institute for Colored" (which no longer exists) near Camp Mabry in what was then northwest Austin.

Penick's map (above) also shows that the University of Texas campus expanded well beyond the original 40 acres set aside in the College Hill Outlot. Moreover, the map shows development taking a decidedly northward orientation. The growth of the university and continued expansion of Hyde Park were prime factors. Finally, the map shows the new additions west of the I-GN railroad tracks, most notably Westfield Addition.





### 1.3.8. INTRODUCTION OF NEW DOMESTIC ARCHITECTURAL FORMS

New trends in domestic architecture affected the physical character of neighborhoods developed in the 1910s and 1920s. This trend made extensive use of popular forms disseminated in national magazines and other publications as well as the advent of house kits sold by Sears Roebuck and other companies (see *figure II-63*). By far, the most common house type was



Figure II-63. *Southern Pine Homes* (top), *Modern Homes* (middle), and *Homes of Character* (bottom). The distribution and mass production of pattern books changed the building trades industry during the early 1900s. These three publications present identical sets of plans that allowed home builders to construct fashionable residences using plans that included such conveniences as indoor plumbing and other innovations of the period. Each page includes a floor plan and an exterior photograph of the subject house. The top figure is the cover of a booklet that the Southern Pine Association of New Orleans, Louisiana, published in 1926. The middle image is the cover of the booklet with an identical layout, but notes its distributor as the Austin-based Calcasieu Lumber Company. The bottom image is the same booklet; it was available from the Melliff-McAllister Lumber Co. of San Antonio. Sources: Internet Archive, *Southern Pine Association*, accessed August 17, 2016, <https://archive.org/details/SouthernPineHomes> (top), Austin History Center (middle), and Southern Plan Association's "House Plan Book" published in the 1920s (bottom).

the Craftsman bungalow. Houses built during the late 1800s and very early 1900s typically had a more vertical emphasis and used various prefabricated materials and ornamentation. Craftsman bungalows, on the other hand, presented more horizontal lines and had less ornate detailing. Tapered box columns and exposed rafter eaves were among the signature elements of the movement. Moreover, the interior arrangement employed a more efficient



use of space that contrasted with the more traditional forms of the Victorian era. These new houses typically displayed a more homogenous character with uniform setbacks and displayed a similar massing, detailing, and use of materials. Variations used stylistic detailing indicative of revivals or new interpretations of Tudor, Spanish Colonial, or Mission styles. The Aldridge Place subdivision is a particularly good example of these trends.<sup>31</sup> (See the *Property Types* section in *Volume I* for more discussion of architectural forms.)

### 1.3.9. THE KOCH & FOWLER 1928 CITY PLAN OF AUSTIN

Among the most pivotal and controversial local events of the 1920s was the adoption of the Koch & Fowler City Plan of 1928. Its preparation reflected Austin's continued growth and expansion and the increasingly complex set of issues facing local civic leaders and politicians. Austin lagged behind other urban areas already implementing city plans to manage growth and encourage development of aesthetically pleasing spaces. In 1927, Austin adopted the council-manager form of local government and soon hired Koch & Fowler, a Dallas-based civil engineering firm, to prepare a city plan for Austin. That same year, the Austin Development Company also hired Koch & Fowler to create Pemberton Heights Subdivision, an upscale neighborhood on the city's west side.<sup>32</sup> The City of Austin subsequently hired the Koch & Fowler firm to prepare a comprehensive master plan for the municipality. The ambitious effort addressed a wide range of issues, including transportation, parks, schools, public works, land-use, and demographics. Most of its recommendations were consistent with the City Beautiful movement; however, the plan's reputation is more closely associated with the segregationist public policies it advocated and the city subsequently adopted. Many of its ideas brought positive change to the city but the plan's enduring legacy is its institutionalization of Jim Crow laws. While blatantly racist, such strategies were widely accepted throughout the country and especially the South.

The plan was Austin's most important comprehensive planning tool since the implementation of the Sandusky Plan of 1840. Seeking to preserve and capitalize on the city's inherent natural beauty, the plan proposed the development of a system of parks and greenbelts along Austin's creeks and waterways, and advocated the creation of new city parks and improvements and enhancements to existing ones. It recommended a network of boulevards and street upgrades not only to improve traffic flow, but also to enhance the driving experience. In addition, the plan advocated the construction of new schools and associated playgrounds in all parts of the city, as well as other municipal improvements. One of the plan's more far-reaching recommendations was its advocacy of adopting zoning as a tool to manage growth. This aspect of the plan had the most profound social consequences, as it essentially proposed segregating the city's minorities to the east side. For more information, see the *East Austin Historic Context* of this study.

To implement these improvements and recommendations, the 1928 city plan advocated a bond program, and local voters subsequently approved \$4.25 million in bonds to implement its provisions. The package provided funds to

construct schools, streets, parks, sewer, and other public works projects. It also earmarked monies for an expansion of Brackenridge Hospital as well as a new public library. Local architect Hugo F. Kuehne, who worked with Koch & Fowler on the city plan, served as architect for both projects. Kuehne designed a southern addition onto the hospital and a separate annex to the rear (west) that complemented the Classical Revival styling of the 1914–1915 hospital. He also designed the new library in the Italian Renaissance Revival style. The structure was built on the site of the 1926 municipal library, which the City moved to 1165 Angelina Street in East Austin as a library for African Americans. The building still stands and operates as the Carver Museum (refer to *figure I-40* in the *Historic Context of East Austin*).<sup>33</sup>

The bond package also funded the construction of a municipal airport (*figure II-64* below). Although the 1928 city plan advocated that the airport be built on the river's south bank, the city instead chose a more remote site northeast of downtown. That site had been recommended by Lt. Claire Chennault, who had been sent from Kelly Field in San Antonio by the Army Air Corps to assist the city in selecting a site. Chennault later gained fame during World War II for his role as the leader of the "Flying Tigers." The airport opened on October 14, 1930, and was named in honor City Council member Robert Mueller, who died in office just a few months after his election.<sup>34</sup>

Figure II-64. Photograph of the Austin Municipal Airport, 1939. Efforts to make Penn Field—a military airfield that the U.S. Army Signal Corps established in South Austin during World War I—into a civilian airport never materialized. City leaders continued their efforts to establish such a facility and the city's approval of a massive bond program in 1928 led to the creation of the Austin Municipal Airport in 1930. The city continued to upgrade and improve the facility until 1999, when the airport moved to the former Bergstrom Air Force Base in the Del Valle area. Source: *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph124006/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



### 1.3.9.1. Austin's Growing Mexican American Population Moves to East Austin

Though the 1928 city plan did not specifically mention the local Mexican American population, other local forces were already supporting segregation of Mexican American communities, sometimes through overt government-sanctioned action. Mayor A. P. Woolridge, for example, requested that only whites and African Americans be allowed to work on the city's street-paving

and that those of Mexican heritage be excluded.<sup>35</sup> Throughout Austin's early history, most immigrants from Mexico settled along Shoal Creek between the Colorado River and West 5th Street, which was largely an industrial zone that developed after the arrival of the I-GN Railroad in the 1870s.<sup>36</sup> A few other families settled along East Avenue and in areas near Waller Creek.<sup>37</sup> Discrimination against Mexican immigrants prevailed throughout the late 1800s and early 1900s, and few economic opportunities existed for the Hispanic population. The creation of the Our Lady of Guadalupe parish in April 1907 indicates the growing numbers of Mexican immigrants. The Congregation of Holy Cross constructed a small wood-frame building at West Fifth and Guadalupe Streets to serve the local Catholics of Mexican descent (*figure II-65*). When political instability and the revolution in Mexico during the 1910s triggered an additional outflow of Mexican citizens into Texas and other states, the existing parish's capacity to accommodate the increased number of worshippers became strained. In addition, the local Hispanic population was increasingly residing in East Austin, and the church sought to be closer to its congregation. The church acquired a tract of land in East Austin in 1926. The lot was at the corner of East 9th and Lydia Streets and occupied the site of the Stuart Female Academy, which had closed in 1899.<sup>38</sup> The construction of the new sanctuary at 905 Lydia Street became a focal point of the local Hispanic population and contributed to an accelerated relocation of Mexican Americans to East Austin.

Figure II-65. Our Lady of Guadalupe Parish, date unknown. This sanctuary stood at 504 Guadalupe and served as the principal place of worship for the local Mexican American community. The Holy Cross Fathers led the congregation until the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate assumed control in 1925. When the parish moved to East Austin in 1926, this building was dismantled and materials were salvaged to construct a new sanctuary at 905 Lydia Street. That building was later replaced with this current edifice at 1206 East 9th Street, which was built in 1953. Source: Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church.



### 1.3.9.2. A New Travis County Courthouse

One of the last projects completed before the Great Depression reached Austin was the construction of a new county courthouse. The 1876 structure, which stood at the southeast corner of East 11th Street and Congress Avenue, had deteriorated over time. Although it had once been regarded as a more impressive building than the 1853 limestone capitol building, the courthouse



required much-needed repairs and upkeep, and perhaps more importantly, many in the community felt it no longer reflected Austin's and Travis County's robust and vibrant character. By the late 1920s, county commissioners worked to replace the building, and in 1930 acquired a tract of land just north of Wooldridge Park. The commissioners subsequently hired the local architectural firm of Page Brothers Architects to build the courthouse, which was completed and dedicated in 1931 (*figure II-66*).<sup>39</sup> The courthouse project set the stage for a series of public works projects (many of which were in the Art Deco style) in the 1930s, as Austin and the rest of the nation endured the hardships of the Great Depression.

Figure II-66. Jordan-Ellison, Travis County Courthouse, 1931. The image was taken as the building was being completed. The courthouse is one of Austin's best examples of Art Deco style architecture. Designed by Page Brothers, Architect of Austin, it epitomizes the kind of monumental public architecture that enjoyed considerable popularity during the 1930s. The building has been in use for over 80 years, but county commissioners are contemplating its replacement. Now known as the Heman Marion Sweatt Travis County Courthouse, it retains its salient and character-defining features to an exceptional degree and is listed in the National Register. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht125310/m1/1/>; Austin Public Library.



<sup>1</sup> A. T. Jackson, "Austin's Streetcar Era," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 58, no. 2 (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1954): 235-238.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Myers and Butman, *West Line Historic District NRHP Form*, 8-54 to 8-56.

<sup>4</sup> McGraw Marburger & Associates, 7

<sup>5</sup> Martha Doty Freeman and David Moore (with assistance from Bruce D. Jensen). *Historic and Architectural Resources of Hyde Park, Austin, Texas*, NRHP Multiple Property Documentation Form (Washington: National Park Service, 1990), E-8. The quote was taken from an advertisement placed in the *Austin Daily Statesman* on June 23, 1889.

<sup>6</sup> Freeman and Moore, E-10; Morrison & Fourmy. *Morrison & Fourmy's General Directory of the City of Austin, 1885-86* [1885], 52.

<sup>7</sup> Emily F. Cutrer, Elisabet Ney, *The Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed July 5, 2016, <https://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fne26>.

<sup>8</sup> "Elisabet Ney Museum," *Austin Parks & Recreation Cultural Places, Natural Spaces*, accessed July 5, 2016, <http://www.austintexas.gov/Elisabetney>.

<sup>9</sup> "The Austin Dam," *Engineering News and American Railway Journal* XXIX, no. 4 (1893), 87.

<sup>10</sup> Daniel W. Mead, "Report on the Dam and Water Power Development at Austin, Texas" (Madison, 1917), 40-41.

<sup>11</sup> *Austin, Texas Illustrated: The Famous Capital City of the Lone Star State* (Houston: Southwest Publishing Co. [1900]), [18].

<sup>12</sup> Larry Speck, "The University of Texas: Vision and Ambition" <http://larryspeck.com/2001/08/31/the-university-of-texas-vision-and-ambition/>.

<sup>13</sup> "Samuel Huston College" *The Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed July 5, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/kbs06>.

<sup>14</sup> Thomas W. Currie, Jr. "Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed July 5, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/iwa02>.

<sup>15</sup> James M. Christianson, "Texas Wesleyan College," *The Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed July 5, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/kbt25>.

<sup>16</sup> "Hollow Reinforced-Concrete Structure Replaces Dam at Austin, Texas, Which Failed Fifteen Years Ago," reprinted from *Engineering Record*, May 29, June 5 and June 12, 1915 issues. On file at the Austin History Center.

<sup>17</sup> *Souvenir of Austin, Texas*, 1911, unpaginated.

<sup>18</sup> "Transportation" *Austin Beginnings: An Exhibit of Memorable Austin Firsts*, accessed June 26, 2016, <http://www.austinlibrary.com/ahc/begin/trans.htm>.

<sup>19</sup> *Directory of the City of Austin, 1912-1913*, accessed July 6, 2016, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph46835/m1/57/>.

<sup>20</sup> The Good Roads Movement advocated a series of actions to improve the nation's road network. Predating automobiles, the movement began in the 1880s following from the invention and early popularity of bicycles. By the turn of the 1900s, automobile enthusiasts joined the cause and soon took control of the effort.

<sup>21</sup> Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc., *The Meridian Highway in Texas*, prepared for the Texas Historical Commission, Austin, Texas, 2016.

<sup>22</sup> Federal agencies had long involved themselves in road system development throughout the nation. The Post Office, for example, needs roads to distribute mail. During the very early years of the automobile era, Congress appropriated funds through the Department of Agriculture's Office of Public Roads to improve roads for the Post Office by conducting a series of test segments to demonstrate the effectiveness of such a system. Among the earliest routes was the Post Road between Austin and San Antonio. The route began at the Congress Avenue Bridge and extended along South Congress Avenue. For more information, see "Report for Historical Studies: Austin to San Antonio Post Road, 1915" by Renee Benn at the Texas Department of Transportation.

<sup>23</sup> David Moore, Martha Freeman, and Tara Dudley, *The Meridian Highway in Texas*, accessed July 5, 2016, <http://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/preserve/survey/highway/Report%20Final.pdf>.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Congress Avenue was paved with brick in 1905 as much to showcase the importance of Austin's most important thoroughfare; however, the use of brick as a paving material remained popular into the 1920s.

<sup>27</sup> Austin City Council Meeting Minutes, September 9, 1927. Available from the City of Austin, Office of the City Clerk, Public Records Access – Online Document Search, accessed August 15, 2016, <http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=89307>.

<sup>28</sup> Austin City Council Meeting Minutes, July 7, 1927, 1927. Available from the City of Austin, Office of the City Clerk, Public Records Access – Online Document Search, accessed August 15, 2016, <http://www.austintexas.gov/edims/document.cfm?id=89781>.

<sup>29</sup> "Bouldin Creek Neighborhood Plan," available from the City of Austin, accessed June 28, 2016, <ftp://ftp.ci.austin.tx.us/npzd/Austingo/bouldin-np.pdf>, 2002, 10.

<sup>30</sup> *La Prella Place, Austin, Texas*, The Portal to Texas History, accessed July 6, 2016, <http://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph61106/m1/1/>.

<sup>31</sup> For more information, "Aldridge Place Local Historic District Application, April 2016," available online at <http://nunaustin.org/pub/docs/1%20AldridgePlaceNominationForm.pdf>.

<sup>32</sup> "Evolution of West Austin Subdivisions," *West Austin Neighborhood Group*, accessed July 8, 2016, <http://westaustinng.com/>.

<sup>33</sup> Humphrey and Crawford.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 178.

<sup>36</sup> By the turn of the 1900s, Sanborn maps also note many "tenements," in the area which also extended to a red light district, known locally as "Guy Town," that developed near the site of the present-day City Hall.

<sup>37</sup> "History of Austin's Racial Divide in Maps," *Austin American-Statesmen*, accessed August 12, 2016, <http://projects.statesman.com/news/racial-geography/>.

<sup>38</sup> "History of Our Guadalupe Church," *Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church*, accessed June 28, 2016, <http://www.olgaustin.org/history.shtml>.

<sup>39</sup> "The Courthouse," *Travis County Archives*, accessed July 8, 2016, <http://www.traviscountyhistory.org/the-courthouse/>.

## 1.4. Great Depression and World War II, 1933–1945

As the 1920s drew to a close, the sense of optimism that characterized much of the decade began to wane. The stock market crash of October 1929 signaled the beginning of an unprecedented economic downturn that endured until the United States entered World War II. As stock values plummeted during the crash, investors suffered heavy losses, which limited funds for capital investment while eroding consumer confidence and spending. Declining sales of consumer goods triggered reductions in manufacturing and other sectors, and in turn, further declines in capital investment and outlays. Decreased demands resulted in further job losses that created a seemingly endless and self-perpetuating downward spiral. At the same time, the population continued to grow (see population counts in *Table I-5* in *Volume I, Section 2.6*). Since Austin's economy relied less on manufacturing, the effects of the Great Depression were not as severe as in other cities; however, the tightening of credit and the general downturn in the nation's economy clearly affected Austin.

### 1.4.1. NEW DEAL-ERA PROGRAMS IN AUSTIN

Land development and real estate speculation declined sharply as the previously robust U.S. construction industry floundered. Austin escaped the most severe hardships of the Great Depression because its economy relied principally (but not exclusively) on education and government. Therefore, some new construction took place in residential developments throughout the city. Major construction activities of the 1930s were publicly funded and government-sponsored projects that occurred after Franklin Roosevelt became President in March 1933. Roosevelt quickly introduced a series of federal programs that became part of his New Deal program. Austin, like most urban centers throughout the nation, benefited from Roosevelt's efforts to "prime the pump," and many public works projects intended to help the unemployed and stimulate the local economy were completed in Austin during the 1930s. Work relief programs also led to a number of improvements that benefited all citizens, and the city undertook a number of small-scale projects using these federal funds. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) funded a wide range of projects included roads and bridges, but it also aided with the construction or improvements of museums, schools, and other educational- and community-oriented institutions.

#### 1.4.1.1. Federal Building

Among the most high-profile local building projects of the New Deal Era was the construction of a new federal building on West 8th Street, which reflected the growing significance of the federal government and its increasingly expanded role in the lives of Austin's citizens. Although the post office relocated in 1914 to its own facility (razed) at West 6th and Colorado Streets, other federal offices and agencies continued to occupy the 1881 edifice. Over time, however, Austin's continued growth led to insufficient office space. As



early as 1928, the Austin Chamber of Commerce advocated that the existing federal building either be enlarged or replaced with an entirely new facility. In 1934, the federal government appropriated funds for a new federal building and chose a half-block site on West 8th Street for the new facility. The lot was owned by the Central Christian Church, which had recently constructed a new sanctuary on Guadalupe Street. Groundbreaking ceremonies for the new federal building took place on September 16, 1935, and it opened on September 22, 1936. C. H. Page and Son of Austin,<sup>1</sup> in association with New York architect Kenneth Franzheim, designed the building under the auspices of Louis Simon and the Office of Supervising Architect of the Treasury Department. The building's architectural qualities exemplified the popular Classical Revival movement, especially within the Treasury Department, and contrasted with many other public works of the period that exhibited new architectural expression, such as the Art Deco style.<sup>2</sup>

#### 1.4.1.2. Civic Improvements

In 1933, Tom Miller became mayor of Austin. An ardent supporter of Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal program, he aggressively sought federal monies to support various projects for the city. Among the largest was the expansion of the municipal building (*figure II-67* below) and the construction of a new fire station in downtown Austin (*figure II-68 to follow*).



Figure II-67. Municipal Building, Neal Douglass, 1948. Using a grant from the Public Works Administration (PWA), the City of Austin hired Page & Southerland, a prominent local architectural firm (and not to be confused with C. H. Page & Son), to renovate the 1906 city hall building at the northeast corner of West 8th and Colorado Streets downtown. The project dramatically transformed the building's physical appearance. When originally completed, the building exhibited qualities associated with the Classical Revival style; however, after being remodeled and greatly enlarged in 1937–1938, the building was completely unrecognizable. With a massive box-like massing and new decorative embellishment, the municipal building reflected the Art Deco style, a common architectural expression employed for public works projects at the time. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph18925/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

Figure II-68. Austin Central Fire Station, ca. 1939. The Austin Central Fire Station represented yet another local Art Deco style building from the Great Depression era. The PWA provided the funds to enable its construction. When completed, the Central Fire Station represented a state-of-the-art facility that provided a necessary benefit to the general public. The local architectural firm of Kreisle & Brook designed the building, which was completed in January 1939. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph124041/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



Miller also helped to establish a municipal golf course when the local chapter of the Lions Club offered to transfer its lease to the city in 1936. After agreeing to the terms, the City of Austin applied for and received federal funding to make a number of improvements. With Works Progress Administration monies, the city constructed a new clubhouse and other buildings. The golf course occupied land that George W. Brackenridge had donated to the University of Texas in 1917. The Lions Club established the golf course in 1926 after signing a lease with from the University. With the transfer of the lease to the city a decade later, the golf course became the fifth municipal golf course in the state of Texas (*figure II-69 below*).<sup>3</sup>

Figure II-69. "Aerial view of Municipal Golf Course, Donated to the City in 1936 by the Austin Lions' Club." This aerial view depicts the Lions Municipal Golf Course in the 1930s. The golf course later became famous as the first such facility south of the Mason-Dixon to allow African Americans to play on an integrated golf course. The event took place in 1951, a year after the Supreme Court forced the University of Texas to allow integration in its landmark Sweatt v. Painter ruling. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph124620/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

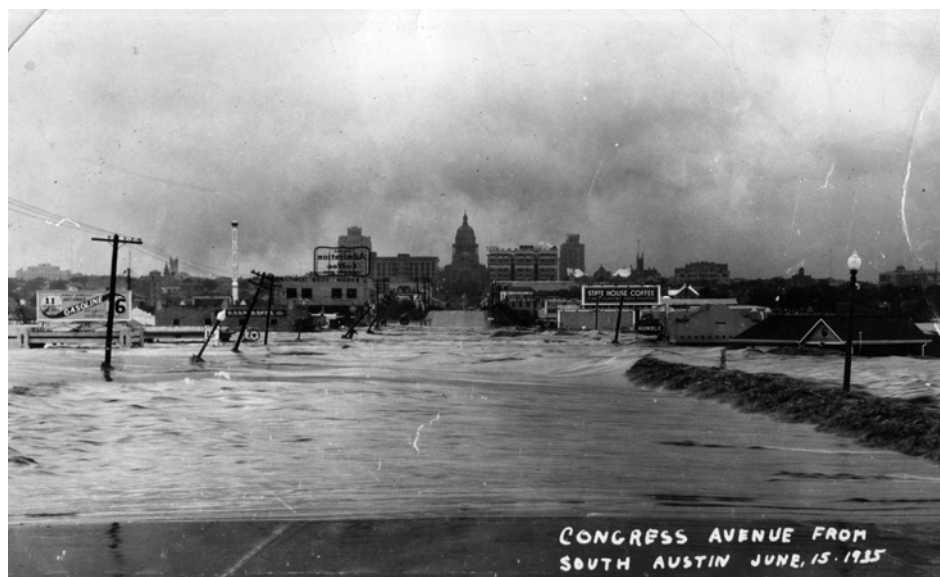


Other smaller-scale work relief programs provided job opportunities in Austin and enhanced Mayor Miller's reputation. Most of these projects were relatively small in scale and aimed to benefit the general public. The City's park program received a great deal of federal aid for park-enhancement projects, building on recommendations stated in the 1928 city plan. With additional federal monies, the parks department acquired land for parks; built restroom facilities, pools, and retaining walls; installed playground equipment; and/or undertook other improvements to parks throughout the city, including Adams-Hemphill, Bailey Barton Springs, Deep Eddy, Eastwoods, Palm, Rosewood, Shipe, West Austin, and Westenfield parks, among others. With federal financial assistance, the city completed additions to Austin High School and Mathews Elementary School, and constructed new facilities in various parts of the city including Becker, Robert E. Lee, and Zavala elementary schools.<sup>4</sup>

#### 1.4.1.2.1. A NEW AUSTIN DAM

Perhaps the era's largest and most significant local public project was the construction of a new dam northwest of Austin. While the dam would primarily be used to generate electricity, it could also provide an effective means of flood control. The need for flood control stemmed from the region's geology. The Colorado River and other waterways extended through the Hill Country, an area with a thin top soil and massive limestone deposits. After heavy rainfall, the limestone quickly became saturated and was unable to absorb any additional water, which caused runoffs and triggered flash floods. In 1935, a massive flood on the Colorado River caused severe damage to Austin, an event that fueled public support to construct a dam for flood control (see *figure II-70*). Mayor Miller spearheaded the project and helped

Figure II-70. Colorado River Flood, June 15, 1935. The rising waters of the Colorado River in June 1935 caused widespread damage in Austin. This image, taken from South Congress Avenue near the School for the Deaf, shows the roofs of several buildings at the present-day intersection of Riverside Drive. Periodic floods continued to plague low-lying areas along the banks of the river through Austin until a new dam was finally completed in 1940. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht124019/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



secure federal monies with the assistance of U.S. Representative Lyndon B. Johnson, whose 10th District included Austin. Work on a new dam began in 1938, slightly upstream from the site of the 1893 dam and its never-completed 1915 replacement. The massive project relied on concrete rather than granite and limestone, and included the assistance of the Lower Colorado River



Authority (LCRA), a state agency created a few years earlier and modeled after the Tennessee Valley Authority. The dam was completed in 1940 and renamed the Tom Miller Dam to honor the man most responsible for its construction (*figure II-71*).<sup>5</sup> The LCRA also constructed the Inks (1936–38), Mansfield (1937–1942), and Buchanan (1931–1939) dams upriver from Austin, which helped to control flooding and bring electricity to a significant area within Central Texas.<sup>6</sup>

Figure II-71. Austin Dam, ca. 1940. The construction of a concrete dam with federal financial assistance through the PWA provided much-needed jobs for the local unemployed and enabled the City of Austin to realize its dream of having a permanent dam built on the Colorado River. Working with the LCRA, the city not only had increased capacity to generate electricity for residential, commercial, and industrial use, it also had a valuable tool to control the flooding that regularly caused widespread damage downriver. The lake created by the dam (Lake Austin) provided an added recreational benefit that



Austinites still use regularly. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph704051/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

### 1.4.1.3. Public Housing

Miller and Johnson collaborated on other federal projects, most notably Rosewood Courts, Santa Rita Courts, and Chalmers Courts in East Austin. The construction of these apartment buildings stemmed from the Housing Act of 1937's enactment, also known as the Wagner-Steagall Act, which sought "to remedy the unsafe housing conditions and the acute shortage of decent and safe dwellings for low-income families."<sup>7</sup> These public housing complexes, the first of their kind in the nation, represented a dramatic departure from past housing policy because of direct federal involvement. They were designed by a team of leading architects in the Austin area. Hugo Franz Kuehne, who also designed the Austin Library and other local landmarks, served as the supervising architect. Other members included Giesecke & Harris, Page & Southerland, and Kreisle & Brook. These three complexes separately targeted each of the major demographic groups within the Austin community, underscoring the continued practice of Jim Crow and segregationist policies throughout Austin, the state, and the South. Santa Rita Courts provided housing for Austin's rapidly expanding Mexican American community. The second public housing complex in Austin was Rosewood Courts, the nation's oldest public housing designed specifically for African American families. The third public housing unit in Austin was Chalmers Courts, which was reserved for whites only. It was built on a parcel bound by Chicon, East 3rd, Comal, and East 5th Streets.<sup>8</sup> (Refer to *Section 2.6.2* in the *East Austin Historic Context* for further detail on these three public housing projects.)

#### 1.4.1.4. The University of Texas Begins New a Building Program

The University of Texas was another beneficiary of federal work relief funding and public works programs of the New Deal, as noted by the construction of a new Main Building and Library. The Board of Regents took advantage of the opportunity to hire Paul Philippe Cret, a French-born and -trained architect who taught at the University of Pennsylvania, to replace “Old Main” and develop a new campus master plan. His design for the new Main Building incorporated elements of the Beaux Arts classicism, which marked a major aesthetic shift from the Spanish Renaissance Revival style that Cass Gilbert had advocated two decades earlier. When completed in 1937, “The Tower,” as it came to be called, quickly became an icon of Austin (*figure II-72*).



Figure II-72. “The Tower’ University of Texas, Photo by Ellison, Austin.” Paul Philippe Cret was a French-born architect who studied at École des Beaux-Arts in Paris. He embraced a revival of classical architectural tradition that gained popularity in Europe and the United States during the late 1800s and early 1900s. A long-time instructor at the University of Pennsylvania, one of the nation’s premier architectural programs, Cret influenced a generation of architects. The Main Building and Library at the University of Texas is one of the city’s most distinctive architectural landmarks and for many years joined the Texas State Capitol as the most visible symbols of Austin. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph125268/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, APL.

The Main Building and Library were part of an ambitious building program that lasted through the 1940s.<sup>9</sup> The University also used federal funding to construct the Texas Memorial Museum, as well as the Andrews, Carothers,

Hill, and Prather Roberts dormitories to accommodate the growing student population.<sup>10</sup>

#### **1.4.1.5. The Texas Highway Department and Road Projects**

Still another public entity in Texas to benefit from New Deal programs of the 1930s was the Texas Highway Department. In 1933, the agency moved into its own nine-story office building on East 11th Street, where the Travis County Jail formerly stood. Designed by the San Antonio architectural firm of Adam & Adam, the new Texas Highway Department building featured Art Deco styling. Its massing and detailing are similar to the contemporaneous Travis County Courthouse. The building's grand scale reflected the agency's growing importance within state government. Federal involvement in highway construction and maintenance following enactment of several Federal Highway Aid acts pumped millions of dollars into state coffers, and with the dire economic conditions of the Great Depression, enabled the state to receive emergency funding and support work relief programs on highway and other public works projects.<sup>11</sup> In this building, the Texas Highway Department oversaw the design and construction of new highways, grade-separation structures at railroad crossings and highway intersections, bridges, roadside parks, and other road-related projects throughout the state. Notable Austin projects included the construction of a new bridge over the Colorado River at Montopolis Drive and railroad overpasses under Enfield and Barton Springs (now Riverside) roads.<sup>12</sup>

A particularly important project for downtown Austin was a new bridge over the Colorado River, west of Shoal Creek. At the time of its completion in 1910, Congress Avenue Bridge was a conduit for all local traffic that crossed the waterway. To ease congestion, the City and the Texas Highway Department collaborated on plans for a new bridge that would complement the construction of Lamar Boulevard, which generally followed along Shoal Creek. The idea of such a roadway had been considered as early as 1934, but the project was delayed for years. Contractors began work on March 27, 1941, and the bridge was officially dedicated on July 15, 1942.

#### **1.4.1.6. Federal Housing Administration and New Residential Standards and Guidelines**

Another important program of the New Deal that affected Austin's development and architectural fabric was the Federal Housing Administration (FHA). Established following the enactment of the National Housing Act of 1934, FHA provided government-supported insurance for privately financed house mortgages with more consumer-friendly conditions and terms. With FHA backing, lenders approved loans with significantly reduced down payments and extended the period to repay the loans.<sup>13</sup> The Housing Act bill aimed to provide relief to the struggling mortgage and housing industries and to forestall the high rate of home-loan foreclosures. However, the act's impact extended beyond those sectors of the economy and had a lasting effect on socio-economic patterns in urban and suburban areas. FHA-approved loans were available not only for individual borrowers, but also for corporate



builders, which encouraged the construction of larger-scale and more standardized residential subdivisions.

Besides transforming lending policies, the FHA also developed new standards to ensure that FHA-backed housing developments were as economical and efficient as possible, yet promoted public safety and quality of construction. These standards applied to both the construction of individual houses and the layout of subdivisions.<sup>14</sup> In May 1936, FHA published a technical bulletin entitled *Principles of Planning Small Houses* that presented a series of prototypical designs for low-cost housing that would be more attainable and affordable for a housing market in distress. The kinds of houses that followed these principles economized building materials as much as possible, and therefore conveyed a more utilitarian character, appearance, and style that architectural historians have come to classify as “Minimal Traditional” (see *figure II-73*). In subsequent and revised editions, the bulletin included guidelines for the layout of residential developments, such as a hierarchical street network, the use of curvilinear streets and *cul de sacs*, and lots of varying sizes and shapes to create a less monotonous setting and neighborhood. The program consequently encouraged new construction typically at the peripheries of cities. By 1940, some FHA prototype plans also included attached garages – acknowledging the auto-oriented nature of the suburban development that they spurred, yet requiring less space and fewer building materials than a traditional detached garage.<sup>15</sup>

Figure II-73. *Principles of Planning Small Houses*. This rendering illustrates the type of house that FHA advocated in this 1936 publication. With standard 8-foot studs and one interior load-bearing partition wall, FHA regarded it as meeting the minimum needs of a family of three or a family with two small children. The sketch was only a conceptual model and intentionally did not provide exact building plans and specifications. Rather, FHA regarded this design and others in the publication as a way to showcase how such plans could be used, adapted, and built throughout the nation. These kinds of houses began to define the architectural character of new residential subdivisions developed in the 1930s, including those in Austin. Source: Federal Housing Administration, 1936 [revised 1937], accessed July 22, 2016, [http://www.hathitrust.org/access\\_use#pd-google](http://www.hathitrust.org/access_use#pd-google).



A number of Austin residential developments trace their history to the FHA program and reflect the standards for house design that the agency first established in the 1930s, including the Rosedale neighborhood as illustrated in

*figure II-74.* Other contemporaneous developments similarly influenced by FHA programs include multiple subdivisions in the French Place/Cherrywood and Bryker Woods neighborhoods.

Figure II-74. This house, at 4602 Sinclair Avenue, embodies the kinds of architectural features and physical characteristics that FHA advocated in its publication *Principle of Planning Small Houses*. Constructed in 1937, according to the Travis County Appraisal District, the house typifies residential construction trends in most of new suburban neighborhoods developed in Austin during the mid-to-late 1930s.



Other, more-affluent neighborhoods in West Austin also reflected the city's continued residential development during the Great Depression – and remained viable despite the economic downturn because of FHA incentives. These neighborhoods show that although the FHA established *minimum* thresholds, developments that exceeded those standards still could gain access to FHA-backed financing. Some of the new developments, such as the Westfield “A” Subdivision (1925), were created just before or as the economic downturn was beginning. Others, including the multiple sections marketed under the Enfield or Bryker Woods banners, were established during the height of the Great Depression.<sup>16</sup> It should be noted, however, that many of these developments included restricted covenants that prohibited African Americans and others from purchasing homes in these areas. Such practices were common in white-only neighborhoods, a trend that continued in subsequent decades (*figure II-75* on the following page).<sup>17</sup>

Conversely, the FHA program had the effect of stifling development in less affluent, working-class areas of Austin. Another federal agency that affected residential development during the Great Depression was undertaken by the Home Owners' Loan Corporation (HOLC).<sup>18</sup> The program created color-coded maps of urban areas throughout the nation, including Austin (*figure II-76*, to follow), that evaluated residential areas taking into account a number of variables (housing and demographics characteristics) to assess neighborhoods. The agency developed a four-tiered system that ranked areas ranging from “best” to “hazardous.” The neighborhoods marked in red thus were considered less stable areas and deemed to have the greatest risk of default. Many historians and housing rights activists point to these HOLC maps as the source of the term “redlining.” Although the issue of whether the HOLC maps

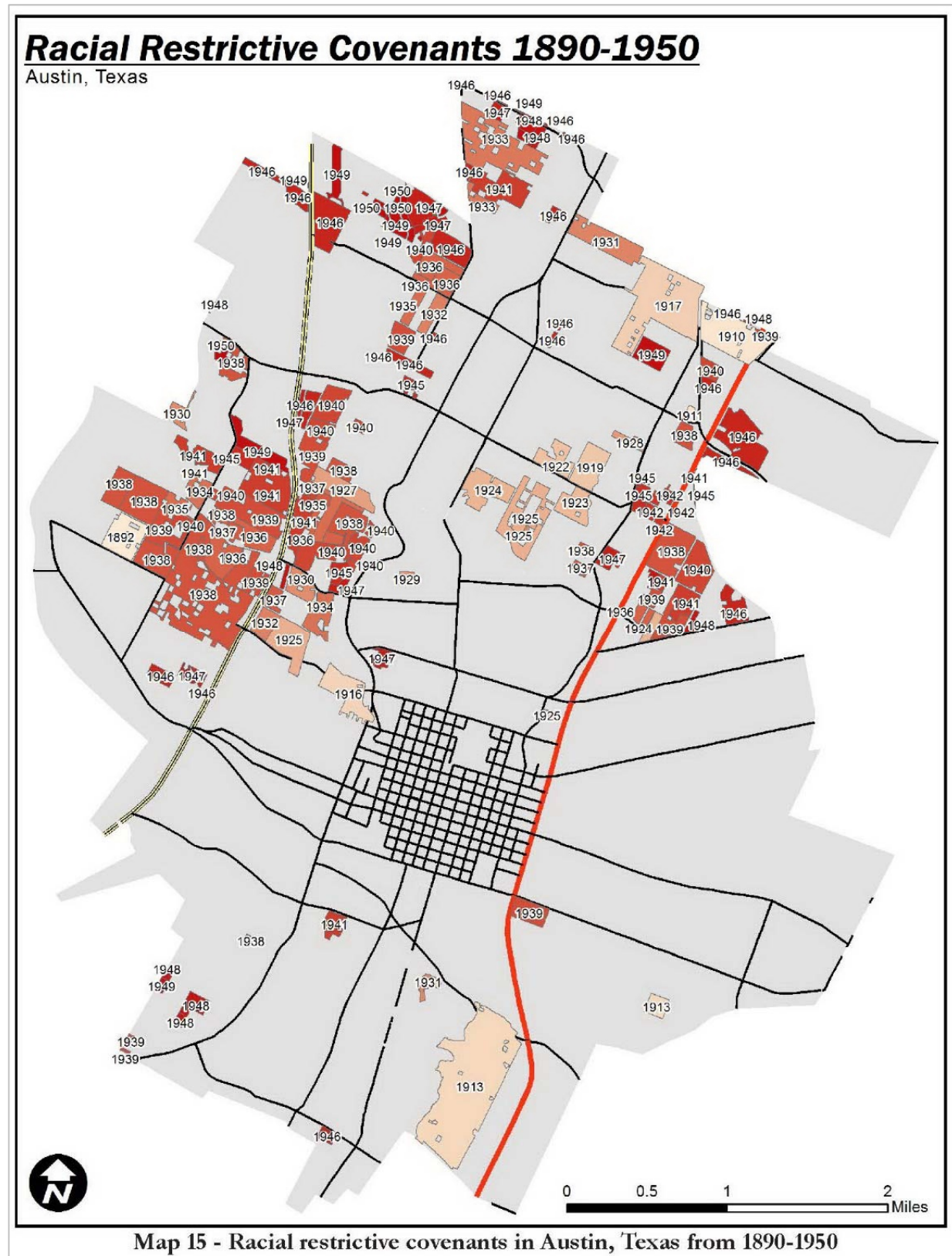
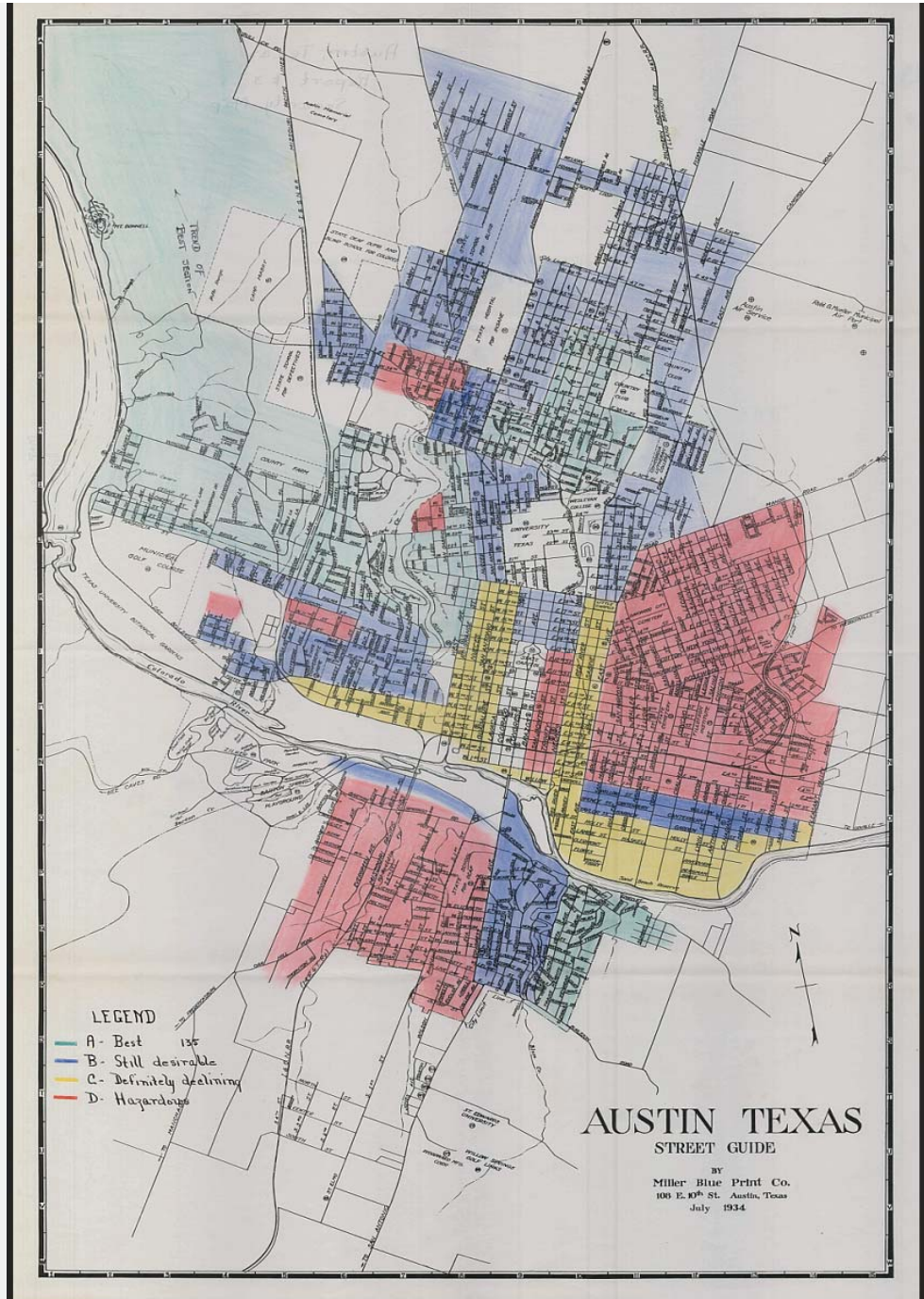


Figure II-75. Eliot Tretter, Racial Restrictive Covenants in Austin, Texas, from 1890-1950. The map shows subdivisions that included language in deed restrictions and covenants that sanctioned race-based discrimination in housing patterns. Source: *Austin Restricted: Progressivism, Zoning, Private Racial Covenants, and the Making of a Segregated City*, available online at <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/21232>.



Figure II-76. HOLC Map of Austin, 1934. This map uses a four-tiered system to assess residential neighborhoods in Austin, which were prepared in urban areas throughout the nation. Kenneth Jackson wrote about these maps in his book *Crabgrass Frontier: the Suburbanization of the United States* and argued that they place a greater emphasis on the locational setting of a property over the merits of the individual loan applicant or the property itself. This map captures Austin at a critical time as the city defied national trends, experiencing new residential construction and an influx of new residents. Austin areas deemed to be the most desirable included neighborhoods that boasted many of the city's more affluent residents and extended to much of West Austin, North University, Hyde Park, and Travis Heights neighborhoods. Many of these neighborhoods encompassed new suburban developments that were just being developed. The "still desirable" category includes outlying areas on the city's north side, West Line, Fairview Park, and East 1st/Gardner Streets neighborhoods. Areas in the "definitely declining" category included residential areas within the original town site and low-lying developments immediately north of the Colorado River. The final category, deemed to be "hazardous," included much of East Austin and South Austin, as well as the freedmen communities of Clarksville and Wheatville and other small nodes along flood-prone creeks. Source: *Urban Oasis: Research Projects: Digital HOLC Maps, "Austin, Texas,"* accessed July 28, 2016, <http://www.urban oasis.org/projects/holc-fha/digital-holc-maps/>.



instigated or merely reflected already prevailing discriminatory loan practices is subject to debate among urban historians and cultural geographers.<sup>19</sup> By overlaying the HOLC maps on land-use maps of Koch & Fowler, patterns advocated in the 1928 city plan appear to be replicated in the 1934 HOLC maps (figure II-77, to follow). At the very least, the HOLC maps provide insights into housing patterns and conditions in Austin during the Great



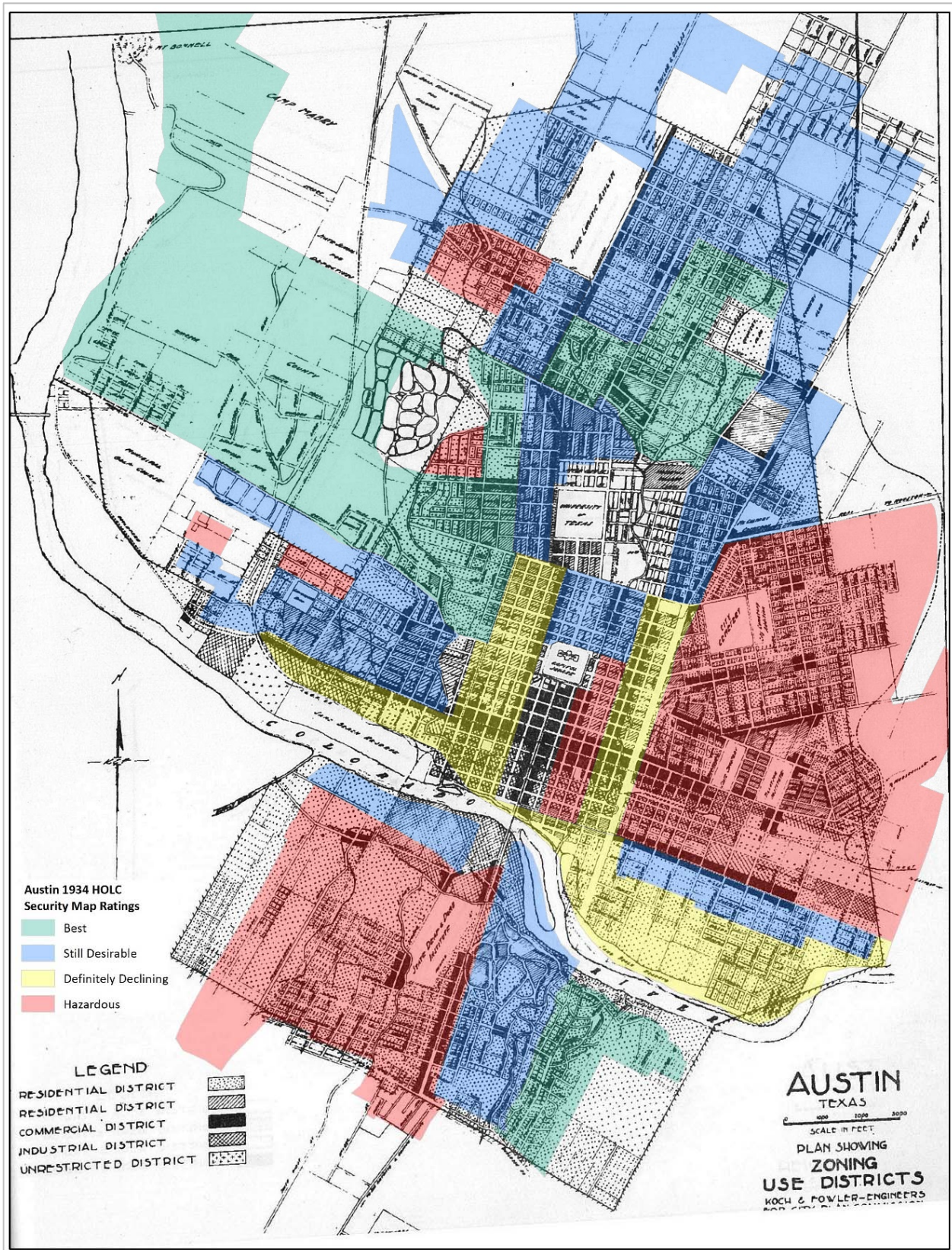


Figure II-77. Koch & Fowler, Austin Zoning Use District, 1928. The base map depicts land-use districts presented in the 1928 city plan of Austin. The four-colored overlay shows the HOLC neighborhood ratings extrapolated from a 1934 map that evaluated Austin's residential areas. Source: Koch & Fowler and Austin HOLC map, overlay by HHM, 2016.

Depression that have endured into present-day. The maps strongly suggest a bias against older neighborhoods and encourage the development of new suburban developments in outlying areas.

## 1.4.2. WORLD WAR II

With the outbreak of war in Europe in 1939, a reluctant United States began to mobilize. President Roosevelt worked with an oft-recalcitrant Congress to improve the military's readiness. In Texas, the establishment of a new naval aviation training base in Corpus Christi and the reactivation and construction of several new Army bases and air fields were steps toward mobilization. These actions also increased federal spending to even higher levels, which helped to stimulate a still-sluggish economy. In conjunction with the build-up of military forces, the federal government also constructed a number of plants designed to produce ships, aircraft, and ordnance for the armed forces. Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 proved to be a pivotal point in the history of the world, nation, and Austin.

### 1.4.2.1. Mobilization and the Magnesium Plant in Austin

After Nazi Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, President Roosevelt began to prepare the nation for war. Among the most ambitious and innovative programs was the creation of the Defense Plant Corporation, which operated closely with the Reconstruction Finance Corporation (headed by Texan Jesse H. Jones) specifically to build tank and airplane factories, ordnance plants, and other manufacturing facilities to support the military, including one in Austin. In September 1941, Representative Lyndon Johnson announced plans to build a \$1.6 million magnesium plant in Austin to be operated by Union Potash Company (subsequently absorbed into a consortium named International Minerals and Chemical Corporation).<sup>20</sup> The Austin-based plant, which was constructed near the I–GN railroad, processed Ellenburger dolomite extracted from Burnet County to produce magnesium. The mineral was used for varied defense-related purposes including the manufacture of industrial machinery and aircraft.<sup>21</sup> The University of Texas acquired the plant from the federal government after the war and established a research center, which remains in operation and is known as the J. J. Pickle Research Campus.

### 1.4.2.2. Del Valle Army Air Field

After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the citizens of Austin and the nation redirected their focus to the war effort. With the notable exception of the Del Valle Army Air Field, no large construction projects were undertaken in Austin during war years. Construction at the base began during the summer of 1942 using standardized plans and wood-frame construction, and Del Valle Army Air Field was activated on September 19, 1942. It was renamed Bergstrom Army Air Field on March 3, 1943 to honor Captain John Bergstrom, the first Travis County resident killed in World War II. (See *figure 11-78* on the next page.) Access to the airfield was possible because of the recently completed Montopolis Bridge, which crossed the Colorado River southeast of downtown. Although outside the city limits, the airfield directed some growth to the east, especially after the war when the military deemed it an integral part of the nation's defense and classified it as a "permanent" installation.<sup>22</sup>



Figure II-78. Main Gate at Bergstrom Air Force Base, 1948. Although this photograph was taken in 1948 when the former Del Valle Army Air Field was known as Bergstrom Air Force Base, the building was indicative of the kind of “temporary” construction used by the military for bases throughout the country during World War II. It was a simple utilitarian structure that was easy to build, likely from standardized plans. Other buildings on the base included administrative offices, hangars, barracks, and various support facilities. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texas.history.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth389268/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



### 1.4.2.3. Camp Mabry

When the United States declared war on the Axis Powers, the Texas National Guard was called into federal service and Camp Mabry became the headquarters of the Texas Defense Guard, a state-run militia that would be used for internal needs. Most military training occurred on federal installations, including forts in San Antonio as well as Camp Swift in nearby Bastrop. The relatively small size and urban location of Camp Mabry made it a less ideal training area and thus it was not federalized. It remains under the auspices of the State of Texas.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This Austin-based architectural firm operated under the following names: C. H. Page & Sons, Page Brothers, Architects, and C. H. Page & Bro. For more information, see “C. H. Page & Son Records,” 1893-1970, *Texas Archival Resources Online*, accessed July 11, 2016, <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/taro/aushc/00106/ahc-00106.html>.

<sup>2</sup> “U.S. Courthouse, Austin, TX,” *GSA Historic Buildings*, accessed July 11, 2016, <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/ext/html/site/hb/category/25431/actionParameter/exploreByBuilding/buildingId/361#>.

<sup>3</sup> Ken Tiemann and Charles Page, “Lions Municipal Golf Course,” draft, National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 2015, accessed July 11, 2016, [http://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/preserve/national\\_register/draft\\_nominations/Austin,%20Lions%20Municipal%20NR%20SBR%20Nov%2015.pdf](http://www.thc.texas.gov/public/upload/preserve/national_register/draft_nominations/Austin,%20Lions%20Municipal%20NR%20SBR%20Nov%2015.pdf).

<sup>4</sup> “States and Cities: Austin,” *The Living New Deal*, accessed July 11, 2016, <https://livingnewdeal.org/us/tx/austin-tx/>.

<sup>5</sup> L. Patrick Hughes, “Working Within the System: Lyndon Johnson and Tom Miller, 1937-1939,” accessed July 8, 2016, <http://www2.austin.cc.tx.us/lpatrick/his2341/working.htm>; Floylee Hunter Hemphill Goldberger, “Robert Thomas Miller,” *The Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed July 8, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fmi21>.

<sup>6</sup> “LCRA dams form the Highland Lakes,” *LCRA*, accessed July 11, 2016, <http://www.lcra.org/water/dams-and-lakes/Pages/default.aspx>.

<sup>7</sup> Public Law 75-412, Chapter 896, accessed July 8, 2016, <http://www.legisworks.org/congress/75/publaw-412.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Humphrey and Crawford, 200.

<sup>9</sup> “History & Background – UT Tower,” *The University of Texas at Austin*, accessed July 11, 2016, <http://tower.utexas.edu/history/>.

<sup>10</sup> “States and Cities: Austin,” *The Living New Deal*.

<sup>11</sup> Gregory Smith (with assistance from Steve Sadowsky), “1918 State Office Building and 1933 State Highway Building,” National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, 1997.

<sup>12</sup> “States and Cities: Austin,” *The Living New Deal*.

<sup>13</sup> David L. Ames and Linda Flint McClelland, *Historic Residential Suburbs: Guidelines for Evaluation and Documentation for the National Register of Historic Places* (Washington: National Park Service, 2002), 30.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, 48, 61.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid*, 62.

<sup>16</sup> Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc., *Loop 1 (MoPac): FM 734 (Parmer Lane) to the Cesar Chavez Street Interchange, Austin, Travis County, Texas*, CSJ No. 3136-01-107, prepared for the Texas Department of Transportation, May 2011, 2-18–2-19.

<sup>17</sup> Eliot M. Tretter, “Austin Restricted: Progressivism, Zoning, Private Racial Covenants, and the Making of a Segregated City,” available from the Institute for Urban Policy Research and Analysis at the University of Texas at Austin, accessed July 28, 2016, <https://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/21232>.

<sup>18</sup> Created in 1933, the HOLC was a short-term, stop-gap measure that enabled the federal government to acquire housing loans that were in or near default and refinance them on more favorable terms to the borrowers. The program was marginally successful as roughly 20 percent of the restructured loans ended in up in default. Its enduring legacy, however, was the set of risk-analysis maps created under its auspices that many have since regarded as having contributed to housing discrimination against the lower class and minority populations, and the practice of “redlining.”

<sup>19</sup> For more information, please see Kenneth T. Jackson’s *Crabgrass Frontier* (Chapter 11, Federal Subsidy and the Suburban Dream: How Washington Changed the American Housing Market), which discusses the HOLC maps and the advent of “redlining.” He notes the existence of the HOLC maps and maintains that the maps were important in the decision-making process for the approval of FHA-back loans. Amy Hillier presents a compelling counter argument in her article “Redlining and the Home Owners’ Loan Corporation,” which appears in *the Journal of Urban History*. She argues that the HOLC maps did not cause redlining based on her GIS-based analysis other spatial data tools. She maintains that the HOLC maps had little bearing on loan practices and generally reflected existing housing conditions.

<sup>20</sup> “Magnesium Plants Slated for Austin,” *The Victoria Advocate*, September 29, 1941, Google News search, accessed July 12, 2016; Paul D. V. Manning, “Magnesium, Metal of the Future” *Engineering & Science Monthly*, June 1944, accessed July 12, 2016, <http://calteches.library.caltech.edu/95/1/Manning.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> Diana J. Kleiner, “Magnesium Industry,” *The Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed July 12, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/dkm01>.

<sup>22</sup> Art Leatherwood, “Bergstrom Air Force Base,” *The Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed July 11, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qbb02>.

<sup>23</sup> Vivian Elizabeth Smyrl, “Camp Mabry,” *The Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed July 11, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qbc18>.

## 1.5. Postwar Development, 1946–1970

The United States escaped the physical devastation inflicted on many of the industrialized nations that participated in World War II. The conflict not only took an incalculable toll on the lives of millions, it caused widespread destruction throughout Europe and parts of Asia that crippled their economies and destroyed much of their respective manufacturing and agricultural capacities. The U.S. government remained engaged in world affairs by helping to rebuild war-torn regions and provide food for the hungry. The country soon became the dominant force in the world economy, which also ushered in an era of unprecedented growth and prosperity.

The postwar boom contributed to tremendous growth of the nation's urban centers as returning veterans sought new better-paying jobs in cities and towns, received better education through provisions of the G. I. Bill, and started their own families. (For additional information regarding postwar population counts, refer to *Table I-7* in *Volume I, Section 2.7.1.1.*) Demographic shifts and a surge of new births created a housing shortage and contributed to the development of new residential areas, most of which were outside city centers. Low-cost mortgages and innovations in building technologies triggered a rapid increase in housing construction that continued for years. An equally dramatic rise in automobile ownership placed additional strains on the existing transportation network and contributed to the construction of new and more elaborate highway systems, which, in turn, led to the development of larger and more ambitious suburbs in outlying areas. Subdivision designs of the era incorporated many features that the Federal Housing Authority introduced between 1936 and 1940. Common design elements included curvilinear streets, uniformly sized lots, and the use of landscape features. These new residential developments led to a more dispersed pattern of commercial activity that relied heavily on the automobile and an expanding and improved street network. Commercial developers began constructing shopping centers along arterials and major highways from the suburbs to the city center. Over time, these commercial nodes contributed to a decline of activity in historic downtowns.

Austin joined the rest of the nation in this period of prosperity and witnessed a housing boom that not only enlarged the city's physical size, but created new neighborhoods, new patterns of development, and other changes that transformed the area's physical character. The trend toward suburbanization contributed to a decentralization of retail activity and residential development that offered new opportunities, but likewise created a new set of challenges.

### 1.5.1. DEMOBILIZATION AFTER WORLD WAR II

World War II officially ended with the Japanese surrender on September 2, 1945. The event triggered the beginning of a period of demobilization as the federal government closed many of the new military bases throughout the nation and declared that significant numbers of Defense Plan Corporation-funded plants and factories were no longer needed. The effects of



demobilization in Austin were not as dramatic as in other parts of the country. The magnesium plant was closed and conveyed to the University of Texas (reference *Section 1.4.2.1* earlier in this *Citywide Historic Context*), but the two military bases remained in operation. The city also gained another new military installation, albeit a minor one, in the immediate postwar period.

Even though a significant number of the World War II-era air fields in Texas were decommissioned, Bergstrom Army Air Field continued to be an active training facility. When the Defense Act of 1947 established the Department of Defense, it also created the U.S. Air Force, which incorporated most of the Army's aviation-related operations, including those at Bergstrom Army Air Field. The change led the installation to be renamed as Bergstrom Air Force Base. It was soon placed within the Strategic Air Command (SAC), which led to a series of improvements and runway expansions to facilitate the new long-range bombers that operated at the base.

Camp Mabry eventually returned to its pre-war role as an administrative center and training site for the Texas National Guard. Yet it continued to share some facilities with other state and federal agencies that moved to the base during the Great Depression and World War II. The most notable of these was the Texas Department of Public Safety. Created in 1935, it combined several other state operations such as the Texas Rangers and the State Highway Patrol.<sup>1</sup> In 1952, the agency moved into its own headquarters, built at the northeast corner of North Lamar Boulevard and Koenig Lane in North Austin. Designed by the local architectural firm of Kuehne, Brooks and Barr, it remains in use.

While the U.S. military reduced its footprint in the postwar era, the services restarted their Reserve programs in the event of future war. The Naval Reserves Program soon embarked on an ambitious effort to establish over 300 training centers for the naval reservists across the country, including one in Austin. Admirals in charge of the Naval Reserves proposed to build centers of "permanent" construction, but a war-weary Congress refused to fully fund the program. Instead, the Navy proposed to use war-surplus metal buildings to build temporary facilities and tasked the Bureau of Yards and Docks to develop standard plans for naval reserve training centers. The City of Austin, like many others throughout the nation, supported the initiative and leased city-owned land for a \$1-per-year fee for the site of a naval reserve training center on Barton Springs Road, which opened on March 27, 1946 (*figure II-79*, to follow).<sup>2</sup> Many returning veterans joined the Reserves to maintain and improve specialized skills and provide a means to supplement their income; and over time a new group of Reservists trained at the facility.



Figure II-79. The Naval Reserve Training Center follows a standard plan that architects and engineers at Navy's Bureau of Yards and Docks developed following the reorganization of the Naval Reserve Program on March 27, 1946. The Bureau of Yards and Docks developed several standardized plans based on the number of personnel projected to drill at the facility and the geographic area of the applicable Naval District. Since Austin was within the 8th Naval District, the reserve center used a "head house" with three, gable-roofed metal buildings as rear wings (those in other parts of the country used Quonset Hut construction instead). The Naval Reserve Center in Austin opened in 1947 and remained in operation until the mid-1970s, when it was deemed in excess of the Navy's needs and closed. The land and all improvements reverted back to the City of Austin and it is now the Dougherty Arts Center. Although the building has been repurposed, it remains a tangible link to the immediate postwar era in Austin and a vestige of the Cold War. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph62789/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

## 1.5.2. HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS OF THE POSTWAR ERA

### 1.5.2.1. US 81 and the Interregional Highway

While installations in Austin proved an effective reminder of the nation's military needs, yet another postwar project traces its beginnings to defense: the interregional highway. The highway had an effect on the country far beyond its initial military applications. The impact of the interregional highway and its far better-known successor, Interstate Highway (IH) 35, had profound consequences on Austin's development.

As the highway system evolved in the 1910s, military leaders quickly understood its strategic advantages and recognized how it could support a mechanized and mobile fighting force. Following World War I, several army

convoys traveled some of the earliest transcontinental highways—including the Bankhead Highway which passed through Texas—as a way to garner support for a national highway system.<sup>3</sup> In 1922, General John J. Pershing proposed a highway network that linked the nation’s major military installations, and one of the north–south routes cut through Austin, along a segment of the Meridian Highway (State Highway No. 2) in Texas. The idea of a major highway system was debated into the next decade, as evidenced by several bills that advocated “super highways,” in part to support national defense. A major breakthrough occurred during World War II, when Congress passed the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1944. Among its provisions, the act provided funding for a system of interregional highways in select parts of the country. One of the routes was the segment of US 81 between Fort Worth and San Antonio, one of the nation’s most important military centers. Highway engineers and designers also advocated that these new highways be constructed along new alignments to avoid developments and areas of congestion along existing routes.<sup>4</sup>

In Texas, the cities of San Antonio, Houston, Dallas, and Fort Worth seized the opportunity to tap the 50/50 matching funds in the Highway Act of 1944, and passed bond programs to build new interregional highways in their respective communities.<sup>5</sup> Mayor Tom Miller led the efforts in Austin, and in May 1946, city voters approved \$940,000 in bonds to purchase right-of-way through the city.<sup>6</sup> East Avenue, which had been enlarged and improved in the 1930s, became the focus of attention because it already cut a wide path through the city and bypassed downtown. City officials, however, delayed the sale of bonds because a similar initiative in San Antonio was challenged in court. After the Supreme Court decided in favor of the City of San Antonio in 1947, Austin moved forward with its own effort.<sup>7</sup>

The City of Austin purchased the necessary right-of-way for the first segments of the interstate east of downtown and the University of Texas. These acquisitions resulted in the demolition, displacement, or relocation of many homes, businesses, and institutions along the proposed route. Huston College, for example, was affected because the right-of-way reached the edge of the school’s property at East 12th Street. The school abandoned the site and merged with Tillotson College in 1952 to create Huston-Tillotson College (later University).<sup>8</sup> At the time of the highway’s construction in this area, the segment of the H&TC rail system that included the A&NW railroad was scheduled to be abandoned. Expecting the railroad to follow through on its plans, highway planners did not include an overpass at the point where the railroad intersected the highway. When the H&TC changed its plans, the highway continued to have a dangerous at-grade railroad crossing, and for many years a passing train could bring all traffic to a standstill. The City Council eventually approved a new bridge across the highway’s southern segment of on the Colorado River’s north side in 1952.

The highway’s design purposely limited access to and from the expressway and eliminated at-grade crossings and intersections to keep traffic moving (*figure II-80*, to follow). This design enabled vehicles to avoid traffic lights and busy intersections; however, it also created a physical barrier that greatly





Figure II-80. The construction of the interregional highway cut a deep and significant north-south path along a corridor east of the original townsite. The highway's design facilitated the flow of traffic and limited points of entry and exit. At strategic locations, the road was designed to go below street-grade (dubbed as "depressed grade-separation structures") and led to the construction of overpasses, such as the one shown in this photograph. At the time of its construction, the interregional highway was considered to be a state-of-the-art facility, but as traffic volumes rose and travel speeds increased, it soon became obsolete. It also could not be widened easily primarily because of the below-grade segments. The photograph also shows a number of residential properties fronting onto the highway. Over time, such lots became valuable for commercial use. Source: <http://texasfreeway.com/> (original on file at the Texas Department of Transportation Photo Archives).

affected intra-city travel. Coupled with the segregationist policies of the 1928 city plan, the new interregional highway cut off East Austin from the rest of the city and disenfranchised the area's largely minority population.

### 1.5.2.2. The Interstate Highway System and IH 35

The interregional highway system brought significant change to Austin and other communities, but its effects paled in comparison to those created by its successor, the Interstate Highway System, which was established following passage of the Federal Aid Highway Act of 1956. On June 29, 1956, President Dwight D. Eisenhower signed this landmark piece of legislation that transformed the nation's highway program, and initiated the expenditure of \$25 billion and the construction of 41,000 miles of interstate highways throughout the nation for fiscal years 1957 through 1969. The act also gave the federal government an increasingly important role in the planning, design, construction, and maintenance of highways. Furthermore, it provided a funding formula that provided a steady and reliable source of monies for highways. Unlike previous funding efforts, the Highway Act of 1956 enabled the states to pay only 10 percent of the construction costs and the federal government would pay the rest. Such a state-friendly formula proved to be a boon to state highway departments across the country, including Texas, and resulted in a dramatic building program that transformed the nation's landscape.<sup>9</sup>

A large segment of US 81, including the interregional highway component through Austin, became part of the new Interstate Highway System, designated as Interstate Highway 35. With significant increases in funding, highway engineers made plans to enlarge and improve the already overburdened interregional highway. While the existing alignment remained in use across parts of the city, in other areas, especially downtown, the

highway was widened with an elevated section along one part and a parallel adjoining section along another part. Work continued into the early 1960s but problems still remained, especially in older segments that were not widened. The short entrance ramps provided insufficient room for incoming traffic to merge, and the highway's capacity to handle the increased traffic. To alleviate these concerns, highway planners designed a second deck elevated above the roadway from about East 19th (MLK) Street to Airport Boulevard. Work was completed in the early 1970s.

### **1.5.2.3. Missouri Pacific Boulevard (MoPac)**

In 1950, Austin City Council took steps to develop a boulevard along the Missouri-Pacific (formerly I-GN) railroad on the city's west side, resurrecting an idea dating back to the 1920s. The city proposed a 40 foot right of way on either side of the tracks for a new vehicular roadway. As planned, the boulevard would extend north from West 5th Street to Anderson Lane, passing through a large part of the historic freedmen community of Clarksville. In 1953, the city council passed a resolution to extend the new boulevard farther south to link with West 1st (Cesar Chavez) Street. Subsequent negotiations between the city and the railroad stalled over the next five years following disagreements over the right-of-way transfer and costs associated with grade improvements. Finally, in late 1961, the city council and the Missouri-Pacific Railroad came to an agreement over the acquisition of right-of-way. Austin voters supported the project with a series of bond packages. Despite public support, construction was delayed as the roadway's concept and design changed and the route extended southwards over the Colorado River. The new plan created more and wider lanes that required additional right-of-way acquisition and led to the demolition or relocation of houses along the path. The initial segment was completed in 1975 and stretched from Bee Cave Road south to Ranch-to-Market (RM) 2222 north. The route, which later became known as State Loop 1, eventually stretched further in each direction.

## **1.5.3. DEVELOPMENTAL PATTERNS ASSOCIATED WITH CHANGES IN THE ROAD NETWORK**

### **1.5.3.1. Suburban Residential Development**

Real estate developers quickly realized the many opportunities offered by the new highway and often touted the advantages of new subdivisions located on or near the new interregional highways. The developer of the Georgian Acres subdivision in north Austin published an advertisement in the local newspaper that extolled the neighborhood's proximity to the new interregional highway. Further promoting its appeal, the ad noted that property owners paid no city taxes but could enjoy nearby amenities such as a school and "community" (shopping) centers.<sup>10</sup> The subdivision included land between Old US 81 (Lamar Boulevard) and the new interregional highway, and thus had access to both roadways.

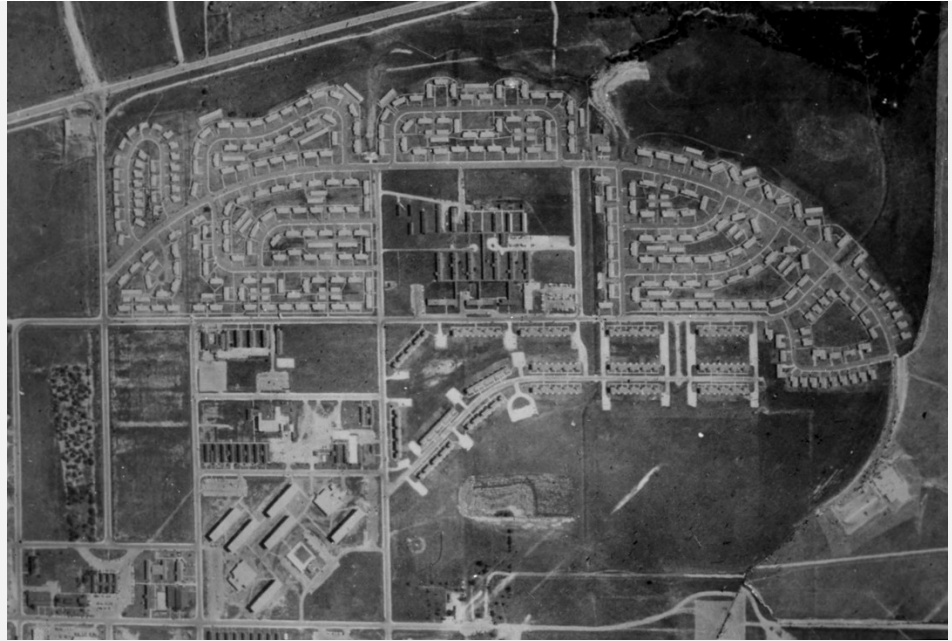
One of the areas that experienced the most intense residential development during the postwar era took place in northwest Austin. W. M. Graham platted

the first of multiple subdivisions that included the “Allandale” name. Previously, he had contributed to much of the residential growth in West Austin in the 1920s and 1930s, but turned his attention to a more remote area on what was then the outskirts of Austin. The original Allandale Subdivision included a large tract of land immediately north of Northland Drive, an important east–west roadway that emerged during the postwar period. In its layout, the subdivision adopted many of the standards and principles that the FHA advocated, such as curvilinear streets that created more privacy for homeowners. Following a pattern established in other parts of the city (Tarry Town, Bryker Woods, Enfield, and Rosedale, for example), the subdivision’s success led to the creation of additional residential areas using “Allandale” in its name, such as Allandale West and Allandale Terrace among others. Although these subdivisions were created by multiple developers over a multi-year period, the greater Allandale neighborhood conveys a cohesive quality that typifies a typical postwar suburb. Allandale houses were built primarily in the Ranch style, which enjoyed considerable popularity throughout Austin and much of the nation at that time. As the neighborhood grew, demands for various amenities led to the construction of recreational and educational improvements in the area, such as Northwest District Park and Gullett Elementary School. Likewise, the new shopping center at Burnet Road and Northland Drive with its H.E.B. grocery store was another neighborhood attribute. Its many stores enabled nearby residents to purchase everyday staples and minimized the need to travel to a less automobile-friendly downtown setting.<sup>11</sup> Other neighborhoods throughout Austin followed a similar pattern and reflect an important era in local history.

The housing boom also reached military bases around the country, including Austin’s Bergstrom Air Force Base, as simmering tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union kept the militaries of both countries on heightened alert, a time now known as the Cold War. Despite demobilization in World War II’s immediate aftermath, conflict in Korea and the ensuing Cold War triggered a massive buildup of defense-related industrial concerns and improvements at military bases. One of the major initiatives of the postwar military buildup addressed the lack of housing to support a sustained and well-prepared fighting force facing a shortage similar to that affecting the civilian sector. In 1949, Senator Kenneth Wherry of Nebraska introduced legislation for the construction of family housing on or near military housing. A key aspect of the legislation stated that private developers would build and maintain the housing using low-interest loans insured by FHA. After a 40-year period, the housing would be conveyed to the federal government. The program was augmented in 1955 with the enactment of the Capehart Housing Act, which was similar to Wherry Housing except that the privately built units were conveyed to the federal government immediately upon their completion.<sup>12</sup> The program in Austin, called the Bergstrom Corporation Housing Development, created a new residential subdivision at the air force base (*figure II-81* on the next page).



Figure II-81. This aerial photograph shows the massive housing complex at Bergstrom Air Force Base. Similar residential areas were developed at other military bases across the country. These housing units remained a vital part of the base until its closure in the mid-1990s, at which point many of the houses were moved and reused. The physical and architectural characteristics of these military housing complexes were consistent with the kinds of large-scale suburban residential developments constructed for civilians during the postwar era. The construction of houses under the Capehart and Wherry programs alleviated housing shortages on military bases during the extended Cold War.



Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth33139/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

### 1.5.3.2. Commercial Development

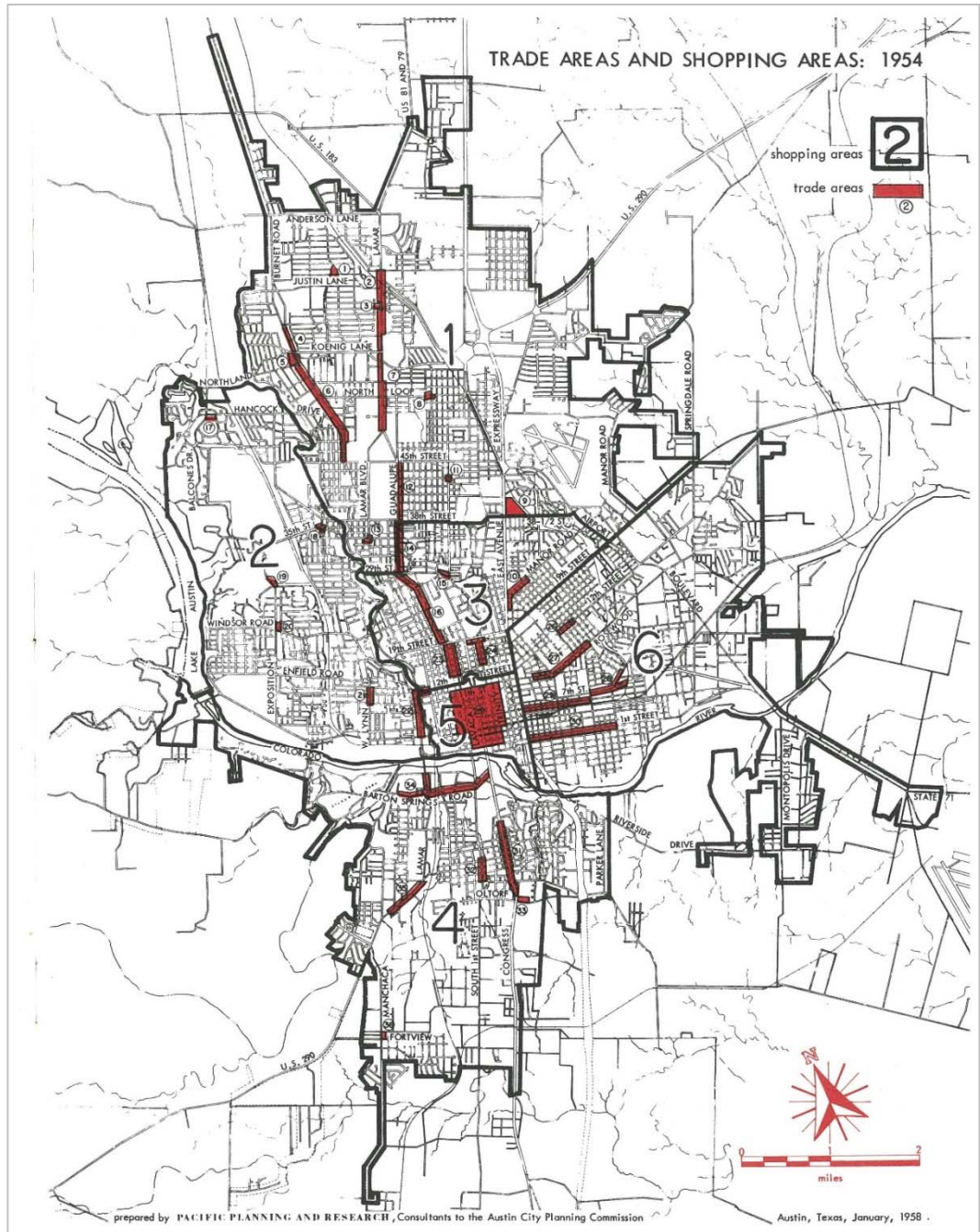
The interregional highway's construction spurred commercial development along the roadway and was particularly common in outlying areas. For example, the *Austin Sunday American-Statesman* reported in March 1950 on the Delwood Center's construction, a "community center" at the corner of the interregional highway and 38 ½ Street, and planned its completion to coincide with the opening of the "new Interregional Highway."<sup>13</sup> In announcing the commercial venture, landowner and developer Bascom Giles stated that it would serve neighborhoods being developed in what was then the outskirts of Austin proper, including his own Wilshire Wood and Wilshire Park subdivisions. He added that the shopping center also would be the first shopping opportunity for those who lived in rural areas to the north and east of the city. The article also noted that the commercial center would be on the "principal artery of motor travel between Houston and Austin, Dallas and Austin and San Antonio and Austin."<sup>14</sup>

Additional commercial developments began to line other segments of the highway. As early as 1953, a furniture store was built near the point where Cameron Road branched off from East Avenue and the soon-to-be built interregional highway. Before the interregional highway's construction, such a retail store would have appeared downtown, but shoppers increasingly began to patronize businesses established in outlying areas near the new suburbs. The trend accelerated over time. For example, in 1958, Cameron Village Shopping Center was built just to the north of that furniture store. Montgomery Ward also participated in the expanding commercial corridor that developed between the interregional highway and Cameron Road, and in 1959 built a new store near the intersection of the highway and Reinli Street. Within two years, developers constructed Capital Plaza, an L-shaped grouping of buildings and shops that included a broad expanse of paved parking for

shoppers. In 1959, the City of Austin sold a large tract of land formerly part of the Austin Country Club to Homart, a land development branch of Sears & Roebuck Company, which recognized the property's commercial potential. Soon thereafter, Homart built Hancock Shopping Center and placed as its anchor a new Sears store, which fronted onto and was easily visible from the new interregional highway.<sup>15</sup>

Other commercial centers developed on major roads within the city's street network as was noted in the 1958 city plan of Austin (figure II-82). (The 1958 Austin Plan is discussed in detail in *East Austin Historic Context* of this study.)

Figure II-82. Trade Areas and Shopping Areas, 1956. In 1955, the City of Austin hired Harold F. Wise Associates of Menlo Park, California to prepare a new comprehensive master plan. Under a new name (Pacific Planning and Research), the firm published its report entitled *The Austin Plan*, although city council minutes often refer to it as the "Austin Development Plan." The report considered various topics and issues facing Austin's rapid growth during the postwar era. This map confirms the disbursement of shopping patterns among local residents as an increasingly car-dependent populace shopped at retail stores built along the city's busiest thoroughfares. This trend continued until the present day. Source: *The Austin Plan*.



Commercial developers typically opened these shopping nodes near rapidly developing neighborhoods such as Allandale, Crestview, and Barton Hills (*figure II-83*). Smaller retailers also took advantage of the constant flow of people to the grocery stores that often were the focal points of these commercial developments. Furthermore, the shopping centers offered expansive paved parking lots, a contrast to a congested downtown with limited spaces.

Figure II-83. Neal Douglass (photographer), Lamar Shopping Center; South Lamar Boulevard, 1958. The Lamar Shopping Center is representative of the postwar shopping centers built along major roadways in suburban Austin, such as South Congress Avenue, Lamar Boulevard, and Burnet Road. With Handy Andy as its anchor, this shopping center provided a convenient place for residents of nearby Barton Hills and other subdivisions to obtain everyday goods. The expansive lot provided ample space for customers to park at any of the retail store in the complex. This shopping center was recently demolished to make way for a new mixed-use development. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashist.ory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht19516/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



Besides shopping centers, the new highway led to a construction boom of other commercial enterprises. Many of these businesses catered to the growing number of travelers passing through Austin using the improved highway system. The Villa Capri Hotel, for example, was a new “motor hotel” on the highway’s west side, near the University of Texas (*figure II-84*, to follow). The era’s motels were far different in design and layout than their predecessors: the tourist courts and their semi-detached quarters. The motels typically included a row of rooms in a one- or two-story building that often overlooked a swimming pool and restaurant and/or motel office buildings. Service stations also lined the frontage roads, enabled by motorists’ easy on-and-off access to the highway.

The arrival of retail giants such as Sears and Montgomery Wards in suburban shopping centers—along with neighborhood-oriented “community” centers, such as Delwood—contributed to greater decentralization of Austin’s commercial shopping patterns that, in turn, affected downtown. Although some independent merchants moved to these suburban nodes, those who remained downtown often sought to upgrade their storefronts. A common technique of the period involved the application of false fronts over original façades, as evidenced in *figure II-85* (to follow). Another trend of the era was the construction of larger high-rise buildings that gave the downtown a different and more distinctive character that was much less pedestrian-friendly. Austin’s skyline changed due to the construction of multi-story office buildings, such as the Commodore-Perry Building at East 8th and Brazos



Figure II-84. (Top right) Neal Douglass (photographer), Villa Capri Hotel, 1959. When it opened in 1958, the Villa Capri embodied many of the elements that characterized roadside architecture of the 1950s. The sharp and prominent angles of its modern design presented a jet-age look that, along with its tall and distinctive sign, caught the eyes of passing motorists driving on the nearby interregional (soon to be IH 35) highway. The Villa Capri remained in operation until the 1980s when it closed because of financial problems. The building was later demolished in 1988, and the Frank Denius Practice Field for the University of Texas football team now occupies the site. The Texas Archive has preserved digital copies of television commercials advertising the Villa Capri ([http://www.texasarchive.org/library/index.php/2010\\_01862](http://www.texasarchive.org/library/index.php/2010_01862)). Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth19181/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



Figure II-85. (Bottom left) Since the late 1800s, Congress Avenue boasted an impressive collection of mostly one- and two-story commercial buildings with elaborate storefronts that, at the time, were considered to be fashionable and of the most modern design. Over time, architectural preferences changed, and by the postwar era, the eclectic tastes of the Victorian era lost favor. Many downtown merchants applied false fronts to their stores to give their properties a modern, streamline look. The Zales store at 704 Congress Avenue illustrates how store owners worked to give their properties a fresh look and hoped to retain and lure back their customers. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth329360/m1/1/>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.

Streets (*figure II-86* below). Congested streets and the lack of parking created additional challenges for owners of downtown commercial properties. Although Austin's downtown experienced a decline in retail sales consistent with patterns in other urban centers of the era, the city remained viable.

Figure II-86. At the time of its completion in 1950, the Commodore Perry Hotel at 800 Brazos Street (still standing) was Austin's tallest building. It was designed by Kuehne, Brooks, and Barr, a prominent local architectural firm of the period. The Commodore Perry Hotel was one of several high-rise buildings constructed during the postwar period and epitomized the changing architectural character of downtown. Like most of the high-rise buildings of the era, it did not front onto Congress Avenue and thus had a minimal effect of the visual corridor looking up to the Texas Capitol Building. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapht19628/m1/1/> crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



### 1.5.3.3. Industrial Development

Unlike most cities in the state and nation, Austin has not historically relied on manufacturing and industry as important sources of jobs and revenue. However, the city's growing population in the postwar era attracted a few industrial concerns. Perhaps the most important was the Jefferson Chemical Plant, constructed in 1949 in the 7100 block of North Lamar Boulevard at what was then the outskirts of town (*figure II-87*, to follow).<sup>16</sup> This location placed it near the strategic intersection of two important transportation systems in north Austin: the railroad (H&TC) and the highway (US 183/State Loop 275). This industrial complex became a new focal point in a part of the city that experienced rapid growth during the 1950s and 1960s. Several subdivisions were created nearby that generally targeted the growing middle class. The plant's location was inconsistent with the city's effort to concentrate most industrial development on the east side, a policy stated in the 1928 Koch & Fowler city plan.

Figure II-87. Neal Douglass (photographer), Jefferson Chemical Plant, 1951. The Jefferson Chemical Company was created in 1944 when the Texas Company (Texaco) and the American Cyanamid Company joined forces to develop useful petroleum-based chemicals from previously discarded byproducts of oil-refining processes. The plant in Austin provided a number of local jobs, and many workers likely lived in nearby neighborhoods such as Crestview, which is shown being developed just above (west) of the complex. In 1980, Texaco acquired American Cyanamid Company's interest in the firm and operated it as a subsidiary. Texaco later sold its worldwide petrochemical operations, including the Austin plant to the Salt Lake City-based Huntsman Petrochemical Corporation. In 2004, the company announced the plant's closing, and the site has since been redeveloped for mixed-uses purposes including the Crestview Station on the Capital MetroRail system. Source: University of North Texas Libraries, *The Portal to Texas History*, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth74571/m1/1/?q=jefferson%20chemical%20plant>; crediting Austin History Center, Austin Public Library.



One of the postwar period's largest and most controversial local industry-related initiatives was a city-sponsored project in East Austin. The construction of the Holly Street Power Plant provided a new source of electricity for a rapidly growing and energy-hungry city, and the facility supplemented the LCRA plant at Tom Miller Dam and the Seaholm Power Plant (listed in the National Register) near the mouth of Shoal Creek. Work on the complex began in 1958, and the project took Houston-based firm Brown and Root two years to construct. When completed in 1960, the plant initially included two natural gas and fuel oil-powered units but was enlarged in 1966 and 1974. Its operation relied on the Longhorn Dam's simultaneous construction, which not only provided a reservoir to cool water heated at the plant but also created one of the city's best-known amenities, Town Lake (now Lady Bird Lake). Over the years, subsequent chemical and fuel oil spills at the Holly Street Power Plant exposed the public to health and safety risks, especially those living in the area. (See *Sections 2.7.3.1 and 2.8.4 of the East Austin Historic Context* for additional information.) Area residents became increasingly alarmed about such environmental threats and rallied for its closure, citing concerns about potential exposure to hazardous waste materials and ongoing noise and air pollution. Such efforts proved successful and by 1994, the city began making plans to close the facility. It ceased operations on September 30, 2007.<sup>17</sup>

#### 1.5.4. CONTINUED GROWTH IN THE 1960S

Patterns established in the immediate postwar period continued into the next decade, and the pace and scale began to accelerate. No other part of Austin



illustrated the effects of the suburbanization **more** than downtown. Continued construction of new shopping centers along major roadway corridors took its toll on downtown merchants. Many sought to modernize their storefronts by applying false fronts over older and out-of-fashion buildings, hoping to present a more modern appearance. However, limited downtown parking remained an issue. The desire to provide more off-street parking led to the demolition of older structures in the downtown to build parking garages or surface lots. Other retailers either opened branch stores or abandoned their downtown locations altogether. Scarborough's Department Store, a mainstay in downtown Austin since 1893, built a large satellite store in Highland Mall, Austin's first enclosed shopping center which opened in 1971. Also, the growing popularity of high-rise buildings increasingly crowded the skyline and began to obscure old landmarks such as the capitol building, the Littlefield Building, and the Scarborough Building. The warehouse district remained a distinctive part of downtown but soon faced competition from new areas being developed for similar purposes in city-sanctioned zones that emerged in outlying areas in the north, east, and south. Strategically located on railroad tracks in the growing suburbs, these locations were built on less valuable land and thus provided owners a way to increase profits. Moreover, they were in less congested areas and had better access to the interstate highway, which enhanced the trucking industry.

Suburbanization continued as developers created new residential neighborhoods in all parts of the city and expanded into areas once considered too remote to be improved. Some of these projects were large and encompassed large tracts of land. Developers such as Nash Phillips Copus and Nelson Puett offered new houses for a growing middle class in Allandale, Barton Hills, and other residential neighborhoods. Other developments, however, were small in scale, such as those by A. D. Stenger, who was the developer, architect, and builder of the A. D. Stenger Addition and South Lund Park in the Barton Hills neighborhood. A graduate of the University of Texas School of Architecture, Stenger was part of a generation of new designers from the program that abandoned the more formal Beaux Arts classicism trend and embraced Modernism (*figure II-88*).<sup>18</sup>

Figure II-88. This house is an example of the work of A. D. Stenger, who was responsible for creating several small residential neighborhoods in Austin during the postwar period. Stylistically, it represented a departure from common house designs of the era and reflects the growing Modern movement. Source: *AD Stenger: architect/builder*, <http://stenger.rileytriggs.com/man.htm>.



In response to shifting demographic patterns, some church congregations abandoned their historic downtown locations and moved to new suburbs in outlying areas. The First Presbyterian Church of Austin illustrates this trend. In 1960, they moved to a new sanctuary built on Jackson Avenue between Bull Creek Road and the still-proposed Missouri Pacific Boulevard in 1960 (the land is now part of Westminster Manor retirement community). After 18 years at this site, the congregation decided to move again and built a new church on Mesa Drive in Northwest Austin in 1978.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Laurie Marder, "Camp Mabry Historic District," *National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*, 8-64.

<sup>2</sup> Hardy-Heck-Moore & Associates, Inc. "Cultural Resources Survey and Assessment of Naval Reserve Centers within the Responsibility of Southern Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Charleston, South Carolina," July 1995.

<sup>3</sup> Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc., et al, *The Development of Highways in Texas: a Historic Context of the Bankhead Highway and Other Named Highways*, Volume I, prepared for the Texas Historical Commission, June 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc., *The Meridian Highway in Texas*.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Humphrey and Crawford, 16, 206.

<sup>7</sup> Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc. *The Meridian Highway in Texas*.

<sup>8</sup> Huston-Tillotson University, *The Handbook of Texas Online*. accessed July 6, 2016, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/kbh12>

<sup>9</sup> Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc. *The Development of Highways in Texas: A Historic Context of the Bankhead Highway and Other Historic Named Highways*, prepared for the Texas Historical Commission, 2014, 200-202.

<sup>10</sup> "Georgian Acres," *Austin Sunday American Statesman*, March 26, 1950, 2, accessed November 15, 2014, <http://newspaperarchive.com/>.

<sup>11</sup> Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc., "Reconnaissance-Level Survey – NRHP Evaluations of Loop 1 (MoPac): FM 734 (Parmer Lane) to the Cesar Chavez Street Interchange, Austin, Travis County, Texas," prepared for the Texas Department of Transportation, 2011, 2-30-2-31.

<sup>12</sup> For more information about this housing program, please see a detailed study that the Department of Defense prepared in 2007 entitled *Housing an Air Force and a Navy: The Wherry and Capehart Era Solutions to the Postwar Family Housing Shortage (1949-1962)* by R. Christopher Goodwin & Associates. Available online at: <http://www.denix.osd.mil/cr/policy/programalternatives/general/housing-an-air-force-and-a-navy-the-wherry-and-capehart-era-solutions-to-the-postwar-family-housing-shortage-1949-1962-volume-i-main-report/>.

<sup>13</sup> "Big Community Center on Super Highway Slated," *Austin Sunday American Statesman*, March 26, 1950, 2, accessed November 15, 2014, <http://newspaperarchive.com/>.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Hardy-Heck-Moore, Inc., "Interstate Highway 35 Corridor, Austin, Travis County, Texas," prepared for the Texas Department of Transportation, 2004, 45-46.

<sup>16</sup> "Crestview/Wooten Combined Neighborhood Plan," available from the City of Austin, accessed July 28, 2016, <ftp://ftp.ci.austin.tx.us/npzd/Austingo/crest-wooten-np.pdf>, 2004, 16.

<sup>17</sup> Kim McKnight, "Parks and Recreation Department Historical Background Holly Shores," City of Austin, found online at <http://www.pavementcouncil.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/Holly-Street-History.pdf>.

<sup>18</sup> "The Man," *AD Stenger: architect/builder*, accessed July 15, 2016, <http://stenger.rileytriggs.com/man.html>.

<sup>19</sup> "The Organization of First Presbyterian Church," *First Presbyterian Church of Austin*, accessed July 15, 2016, <http://www.fpcaustin.org/history/article296566.htm?links=1&body=1>.

## 1.6. Citywide Historic Context Conclusion

Our state capital is a special place for all Texans. From its humble beginnings to present days, Austin has experienced tremendous change; it is now one of the nation's fastest growing and most vibrant and dynamic metropolitan areas. During its formative years, Austin remained largely confined to an area that city founders defined at its establishment. The original town site encompassed a one square-mile area between Shoal and Waller Creeks and which is now regarded as the city center. However, the Republic of Texas, which directed the creation of Austin to be the capital, envisioned its seat of government to be a grand city, and provided for its future growth by setting aside land for further expansion, as delineated by William Sandusky's Outlot Map of 1840. Though Austin grew over time, most of the city's early development largely stayed within the original town site. Congress Avenue became the principal commercial corridor and most state government functions centered around Capitol Square, the northern terminus of Congress Avenue.

With the arrival of the first railroad in 1871, a new period of growth and expansion transformed the capital into a bustling city. Increased commerce and trade triggered new development that extended into Sandusky's Outlots. The subsequent establishment of two more railroads, the I–GN in 1876 and the A&NW in 1882, created physical barriers that directed growth northward. With multiple railroads, Austin became a regional trade center where merchants and entrepreneurs built majestic residences to reflect their wealth. The railroad enabled cheaper and better-quality building materials to be brought to Austin, which transformed the physical character of new residential construction, a trend that continued in the coming decades. The founding of the University of Texas, Tillotson Collegiate and Normal Institute, and Saint Edward's College in the 1880s, established Austin as a center for education. The construction of a bridge in 1886 across the Colorado River physically linked Austin with settlements to the south and opened up new land for development. In 1893, a dam across the flood-prone Colorado River upriver from Austin provided a momentary stimulus to the local economy; however, the dam's collapse seven years later dashed any hopes of making Austin "the coming great manufacturing center of the south." The calamity burdened the city's financial standing for the next several years, hindering its ability to fund much-needed municipal improvements undertaken by other metropolitan areas in the state. Nonetheless, Austin continued to grow and expand with the creation of new suburban developments, such as Hyde Park and Travis Heights among others.

The early 1900s witnessed the beginning of the automobile era and a new chapter in local history. The popularity of automobiles triggered street paving efforts of streets downtown as well as principal roadways extending into and out of the city center. By the 1920s, the city adopted a new form of local government, which led to the preparation of Koch & Fowler's City Plan of Austin in 1928, the first deliberate effort to assess Austin's overall existing



character and recommend steps and actions to manage future growth. The plan's subsequent adoption influenced trends and development patterns for years to come. Not only did it provide recommendations for zoning and land-use restrictions, the plan also advocated a series of municipal projects including roadway improvements, new schools, and public parks. Its most controversial and enduring legacy, however, was its advocacy of segregating the local African American population within a specified part of East Austin. The plan did not explicitly target the local Mexican American population for relocation into a specific area or neighborhood, but such a trend occurred as most settled in East Austin between East 10th and East 1st (Cesar Chavez) Streets. Despite the nation's major economic downturn of the 1930s, Austin continued to grow, but the largest and most visible construction projects of the period involved public buildings and structures that used emergency federal funding and work relief programs. Other notable projects included public housing units in East Austin and improvements to schools, parks, and bridges.

The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor plunged the United States into World War II, which led to the establishment of the Del Valle Army Air Field (later renamed Bergstrom) in 1942. Located southeast of the city, the base relied heavily on a recently completed (1938) bridge over the Colorado River at Montopolis Drive that linked to the rest of Austin. The other notable construction project of the World War II era was the magnesium plant on the city's north side.

After World War II, Austin experienced unprecedented growth, like much of the nation. The local economy remained firmly based on state government and education, but commerce and trade continued to be important factors as well. The construction of the Interregional Highway (US 81)—and its successor, IH 35—changed the city's physical character and affected subsequent land use and development patterns. The highway essentially cut off East Austin from the rest of the city and increased segregation's debilitating effects on the city. It also contributed to the establishment of new suburbs in outlying areas and greater decentralization. Congress Avenue remained the heart of Austin, and the downtown soon boasted many new buildings, several of which changed Austin's skyline. However, the construction of shopping centers catered to residents in the new suburbs, which affected retail sales in the historic downtown area. Both the state government and The University of Texas experienced phenomenal growth through the 1960s and 1970s, and acquired additional lands to build new facilities. Continued population increases led to the construction of new highways, such as Missouri Pacific Boulevard (Loop 1 or MoPac), US 183, and US 290, and still greater expansion of the city limits. As the city grew, its economic base became increasingly diversified yet more dependent on outside market forces. This trend made Austin more vulnerable to boom-bust cycles, which the city experienced during the 1980s and 1990s. Nonetheless, Austin continued to prosper, and has since established a reputation as a center of technology that relies heavily on the city's quality of life.

Thus far in the twenty-first century, Austin has continued to experience explosive growth, which has created a new set of problems. This expansion has strained the city's infrastructure, politicians, civic and business leaders, and others have struggled to meet the demands of a population approaching one million. Rising property values have placed additional burdens on those of modest means and their ability to simply pay taxes, much less meet the rapidly increasing cost of living in a city. However, the city's reputation has continued to shine, attracting still more people to the area. The city's ever-changing skyline illustrates this dynamic, but the city's historic neighborhoods are facing considerable issues and challenges, as the construction of new buildings atop older ones threatens to erase historic parts of the city. Austin's future looks bright, and growth can be managed to ensure that many of the important and tangible links to the city's rich past can be saved, preserved, and continue to be used.

## 2. Future Recommendations

### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

The preservation of Austin’s rich historic and cultural resources is well established as a shared goal, communicated repeatedly throughout the *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan*. The logistical steps toward reaching that goal, however, can be complex and intimidating. These recommendations aim to provide realistic building blocks to help the City of Austin create a comprehensive and citywide preservation program over a period of approximately 10 years. To do so, this report recommends:

- 1). Updating the existing Austin Historical Survey Wiki.
- 2). Conducting future surveys of historic resources using a phased approach.
- 3). Streamlining the administrative policies and procedures that affect the day-to-day functions of the Historic Preservation Office and Historic Landmarks Commission.

The first recommendation—updating the existing Austin Historical Survey Wiki—centers around providing transparency and accessibility to enable Austin’s many community partners to work with the city to achieve its preservation goals. *Imagine Austin* prompts the City of Austin to “protect historic buildings, structures, sites, places, and districts in neighborhoods throughout the city,”<sup>1</sup> but the community must drive such efforts. As an illustration of public involvement and participation in the preservation program, Austin’s Code of Ordinances requires majority owner support for historic district designation (see *Appendix H* which requires community engagement to obtain. Yet the City of Austin Historic Preservation Office has not had to date the resources to provide necessary tools to encourage and facilitate community engagement. An updated version of the Austin Historical Survey Wiki would provide a way to share the city’s data from the East Austin Survey and future surveys, allow community members to view and supplement the data, and enable them to export many of the key components (maps, tables, and forms) required for submission of a local historic district application packet. Moreover, the data would be accessible to create synergy with other City of Austin-based research and analysis initiatives, such as the Cultural Assets Mapping Project. The scope of work and broad cost estimate for implementing the proposed update is set forth in following sections.

The second recommendation—implementing a phased plan for future historic surveys—is a necessary step in identifying local properties of cultural, architectural, and/or historical value that merit preservation and protection. The identification and evaluation of such resources are consistent with the *Imagine Austin* plan, which explicitly states that a policy goal for the city is to:

Maintain and update inventories of historic resources, including locally significant historic properties not listed on national or state registries, archeological sites, etc.<sup>2</sup>



Moreover, the City of Austin’s participation in National Park Service’s Certified Local Government program—which provides a potential federal funding source to support the city’s Historic Preservation Office—requires that the city “maintain a system for the survey and inventory of local historic resources.”<sup>3</sup> Yet planning, funding, and overseeing surveys can be overwhelming when added to the existing day-to-day responsibilities of the Historic Preservation Office, which includes the requirement to research and review demolition permit applications for buildings more than 50 years old. This task alone can exceed 30 cases per month in the current fast-moving real estate development market. The recommendations established below aim to make the process of conducting future historic resources surveys more manageable and predictable, using a phased approach that enables the city to have the flexibility to prioritize select and discrete areas based on various issues and factors. By conducting the survey in phases, the city will be able to complete a comprehensive survey of land within the 1970 city limits within a 10-year period.

The third and final recommendation entails various small administrative changes that could significantly streamline the policies and procedures of the Historic Preservation Office and Historic Landmarks Commission (HLC). These recommendations derive from two main goals: (1) to make the process of landmark and historic district designation more accessible and less burdensome for citizens, and (2) to make the interpretation and application of criteria for landmark and historic district eligibility more consistent and predictable—for city staff, for the HLC, for property owners, and for real estate developers and investors. As noted above, preservation in Austin must be community-driven, which means that it must have broad political support. The best way to ensure political support is through transparency and efficiency, both of which clearly demonstrate that the Historic Preservation Office allocates taxpayer dollars as effectively as possible to generate the maximum public benefit. These small tweaks could yield tremendous results with very little cost or management oversight required.

## 2.2. RECOMMENDATION 1: UPDATES TO THE AUSTIN HISTORICAL SURVEY WIKI

### 2.2.1. Proposed Scope of Work

The updates proposed herein will ensure that the Historical Survey Wiki takes full advantage of new software tools and is enhanced with new capabilities that help users seeking to complete historic district applications, such as exporting maps, inventory tables, and survey forms. To do so, updates to the Wiki should include the following scope of work:

- Easily collect data via mobile devices, import data from previous surveys, and more easily update existing data;
- Browse and search for data via an interactive GIS-based mapping interface that includes layers for parcel outlines, building outlines, and existing and proposed historic district boundaries;

- View concentrations of historic buildings via an interactive map, and organize data into proposed historic districts, including into proposed designations of contributing and non-contributing;
- Export data to GIS, Google Earth, Microsoft Excel and Access, and create formatted inventory tables and survey forms for each property for use in historic district applications; and
- Access an enhanced administrative dashboard for moderators and city staff to easily monitor and regulate user activity.

### **2.2.2. Broad Cost Estimates for Updates to the Wiki**

At 2016 rates,<sup>4</sup> HHM estimates that the scope of work recommended above will cost approximately \$150,000. This estimate assumes robust planning, development, and testing phases over the course of a year as well as includes regular status reports and meetings with city staff and test groups.

## **2.3. RECOMMENDATION 2: FUTURE HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY**

To complete the large and complex task of identifying and evaluating historic resources within the rest of the city beyond the limits of the East Austin project, this report sets forth a number of prioritized survey areas that relies on the methodology described below. The proposed schedule and broad cost estimates are intended to guide the city for planning and budgeting purposes to implement these survey recommendations.

### **2.3.1. Methodology for Prioritization**

The future survey recommendations begin by dividing the city into separate geographic areas with consistent development patterns, in order to form logical groupings for future survey work. The proposed areas for future survey should remain confined within the 1970 annexation boundaries of the City of Austin only. Although more recent annexation areas may potentially include isolated and significant historic resources, the bulk of development in areas beyond the 1970 limits is non-historic and does not merit city investment in historic resources investigations at this time. The proposed areas for future survey are defined according to development patterns based primarily on major roadways, waterways, and historical periods of development. The proposed survey areas' geographic divisions are set forth in *figure II-89 (to follow)*. Note that the East Austin Survey Area is excluded, as are NRHP and local historic districts listed within the past 10 years, based on the assumption that resurvey of these recently documented areas is not an immediate priority.

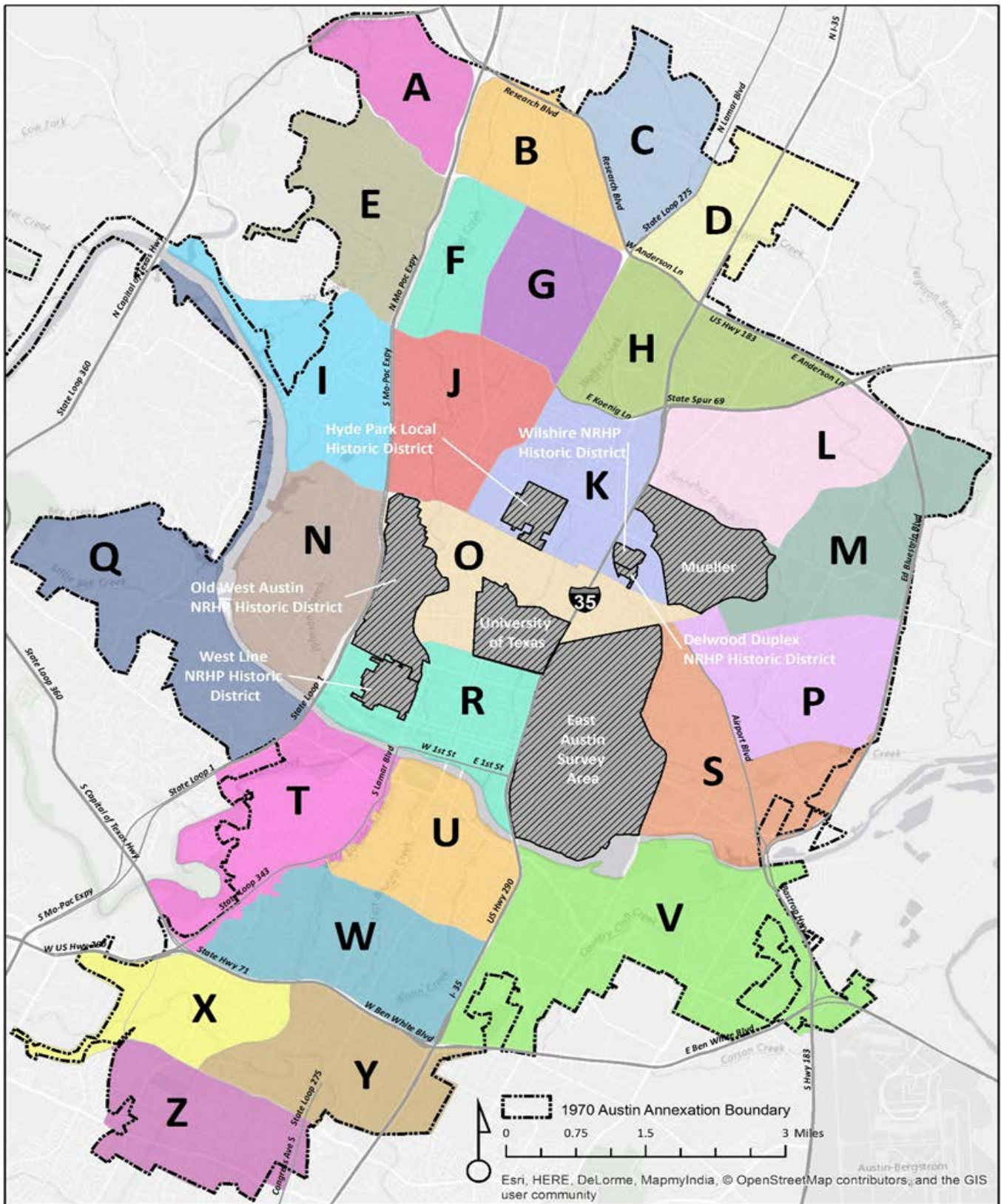


Figure II-89. Map showing the 1970 annexation boundaries of Austin, divided into potential survey areas. Note that the Area IDs are arranged alphabetically beginning in the northwest (top left) corner of the map. Note also that the University of Texas, East Austin Survey Area, and NRHP and local historic districts listed within the past 10 years are excluded. Mueller is also excluded due to its lack of historic-age resources. Source: Map by HHM, using 2016 Google base map.



Priorities among the proposed survey areas rely on a metric that accounts for both the age of the resources and the level of current development pressure. This system assigns added points to resources that are older and areas that have experienced development pressure in the last decade. Priorities are weighted as follows:

- Age of resources, based on Travis County Appraisal District (TCAD) data<sup>5</sup> (65% of score):
  - Percent of resources constructed by 1925 (30% of score)
  - Percent of resources constructed 1926–1940 (20% of score)
  - Percent of resources constructed 1941–1955 (10% of score)
  - Percent of resources constructed 1956–1970 (5% of score)
- Level of development pressure (35% of score):
  - Percent of resources constructed 2006–2016 (35% of score)

Detailed calculations for each proposed survey area are included within *Appendix F*.

### 2.3.2. Priorities for Future Survey

Based on analysis of these findings, this report recommends conducting future survey according to the priorities listed below. Detailed maps of each of these proposed areas for future survey are presented in *Appendix G*. The priority assigned to each area is listed in *Table II-2*, based upon the aforementioned metrics.

Table II-2. Priorities for Future Survey.

Priority Rank	Area ID
1	U
2	O
3	K
4	J
5	N
6	S
7	R
8	G
9	T
10	P
11	W
12	F
13	L
14	H
15	I
16	M
17	X
18	V
19	Q
20	B
21	Y
22	D
23	E
24	C
25	A
26	Z

### 2.3.3. Recommended Schedule and Budget for Future Survey

This report recommends that the City of Austin devote approximately \$300,000 per year to preservation program improvements over the next 10 years, according to the priorities set forth in *Table II-3*. At 2016 rates,<sup>6</sup> HHM estimates that future survey will cost approximately \$50 per parcel.<sup>7</sup> This rough cost estimate should enable the City of Austin to forecast its appropriation needs to complete future survey according to the recommended time schedule. Approximate costs for each proposed phase of survey are also set forth in *Table II-3*. Areas not recommended for survey at this time yield little potential to identify new historic resources through survey and/or are not sufficiently threatened at this time to require that the city proactively evaluate their need for protection under Austin’s Historic Preservation Ordinance. However, given the city’s rapid pace of redevelopment, these priority recommendations should be reevaluated every 10 years at a minimum.

Table II-3. Schedule and Cost Estimates for Future Recommendations.

Priority Rank	Fiscal Year	Area ID	Total No. Parcels	Price Estimate at \$50/Resource
1-a	2017	Wiki Updates	N/A	\$150,000
1-b	2017	U	3116	\$155,800
2	2018	O	3653	\$182,650
3	2019	K	3785	\$189,250
4	2020	J	3844	\$192,200
5	2021	N	3314	\$165,700
6	2021	S	2938	\$146,900
7	2022	R	1866	\$93,300
8	2022	G	3764	\$188,200
9	2023	T	2999	\$149,950
10	2023	P	3376	\$168,800
11	2024	W	3370	\$168,500
12	2024	F	1983	\$99,150
13	2024	L	4699	\$234,950
14	2026	H	2849	\$142,450
15	2026	I	1426	\$71,300

## 2.4. RECOMMENDATION 3: STREAMLINED ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The third major recommendation includes multiple steps to improve the operation of the Historic Preservation Office, foster greater transparency with the public, and provide greater consistency in the application of the city’s criterion and in the decision-making process. The implementation of these recommendations could yield significant public benefit and enhance the visibility and political support for the Historic Preservation Office:

- Enhance educational outreach regarding the work of the Historic Preservation Office and the benefits of preservation:
  - Provide copies of this report on the city’s website and in hard copy at the Historic Preservation Office.

- Hold a workshop with Historic Preservation staff and Historic Landmarks Commissioners to walk through this report's findings.
- Provide educational materials regarding federal, state, and local tax credits, both on the city's website and in hard copy at the Historic Preservation Office, and actively disseminate such information in public forums and private meetings with property owners. Sample materials are included in *Appendix H*.
- Communicate the benefits of listing in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register), which enable property owners potential access to federal and state tax credits. National Register listing may be especially beneficial to promote the preservation of properties that do not meet the two-criteria requirement for local landmark designation.
- Provide a link to the 2015 *Economic Impact of Historic Preservation in Texas*<sup>8</sup> on the Historic Preservation Office website and make hard copies available at the Historic Preservation Office.
- Draft a memo specifying how the city plans to implement the findings and recommendations included within this report. The report has the potential to enhance the consistency and predictability of the Historic Preservation Office's procedures, but only if it is applied consistently.
  - Base landmark designations, historic district designations, and demolition permit reviews on the findings of the East Austin Survey report (and future survey reports) for a period of five years, unless and until a community member brings forward new research findings and clearly establishes that those findings are significant to the history, culture, or architecture of Austin. An internal process should be established for staff to override the survey report recommendations, and this process should be clearly published on the city's website.
  - Use the East Austin Survey report (and any future survey reports) to provide backup materials regarding demolition permit applications for Historic Landmarks Commission agendas so that Historic Preservation Office staff will be able to redirect time and resources toward community-initiated landmark and historic district applications. If the Historic Preservation Office determines that additional research is required, the burden should be placed on the demolition permit applicant. The Historic Preservation Office should work with the Development Services Department to clarify this requirement on the demolition permit application.
- Streamline the application process for community-initiated landmark and historic district applications as follows:
  - Revise landmark and historic district application packages to make them easier to use through:
    - Including references to the information contained in this report.
    - Better explaining the application process and review timeline after the draft application is submitted.



- Allowing all information to be submitted as a form (ideally generated by the updated Wiki) rather than requiring narrative text.
- Explaining that arguments for significant associations should draw direct links with the significant trends and significant property types identified in this report.
- Noting that, if a new trend is identified, a higher threshold of research and analysis is required to demonstrate that the trend indeed has significance to the history of Austin.
- Accept electronic submissions of landmark and historic district applications.
- Provide and maintain a web tracking tool that allows applicants to monitor the progress of their landmark or historic district application.
- Provide and maintain a web-based Frequently Asked Questions forum for common questions about the Historic Preservation Office policies and procedures, and post all email communications with new questions and answers in real time.
- Establish regular weekly office hours for walk-in communication with Historic Preservation Office staff and clearly post these hours on the website.

These administrative efficiencies—together with the update of the Wiki and completion of future survey efforts—promise to enable the Historic Preservation Office to effectively identify, protect, and incentivize preservation of Austin’s historic resources in a way that coexists compatibly with the rapid change and development of Austin’s urban fabric.

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<sup>1</sup> *Imagine Austin Comprehensive Plan* (Austin, Texas: City of Austin, 2012), 122; from the City of Austin, accessed July 7, 2016, <http://www.austintexas.gov/sites/default/files/files/Planning/ImagineAustin/webiacpreduced.pdf>.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> “Become a Certified Local Government (CLG),” National Park Service, accessed July 7, 2016, <https://www.nps.gov/clg/become-clg.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Rates should be expected to escalate according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Consumer Price Index (CPI).

<sup>5</sup> Although TCAD construction dates do have a degree of error, comparative analysis of TCAD data with field survey results for the East Austin Survey and other prior surveys indicates that the data is accurate enough to use for predicting the potential for historic resources in areas at a large scale.

<sup>6</sup> Rates should be expected to escalate according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Consumer Price Index (CPI).

<sup>7</sup> This cost estimate is based on myriad assumptions regarding the scope of work, which include but are not limited to: conducting and completing a comprehensive survey report only, with no research design or fieldwork methodology, and no narrative historic context development; no gathering of oral history; conducting City Directory research for eligible landmarks only; using five-year intervals up to a 45-year cutoff date; conducting a maximum of four (4) total public meetings; providing electronic deliverables for all drafts; and providing a maximum of two hard copies for the final deliverable.

<sup>8</sup> The University of Texas at Austin Center for Sustainable Development and the Rutgers University Center for Urban Policy Research, *Economic Impact of Historic Preservation in Texas* (1999, updated 2015); from the Texas Historical Commission, accessed July 7, 2016, <http://www.thc.texas.gov/news-events/economic-impact-historic-preservation-texas>.

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